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HOW A FOREIGN COMPANY BUILDS ITS BRAND IDENTITY IN VIETNAM

-The Pizza Company Case Study-

Degree in

Business Administration

Thesis Supervisor

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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<p>The Vietnamese Government has been actively offering chances for foreign investors to invest in Vietnam. Consequently, it creates a battle among these investors in sharing their potential market shares.</p> <p>Noticeably, within the Food and Beverage industry which is a fast-paced and fierce environment, the challenges are even more serious. In addition, due to the cultural differences, global companies need to study and tailor their marketing strategies to fit with local preferences. Hence, there are challenges to these brands to be successful in Vietnam where “West meets East” concept needs to be taken into consideration seriously. In this research, The Pizza Company Case study is given to illustrate for this issue.</p> <p>The purpose of the study is to examine the branding of The Pizza Company. Stay focused on its brand identity via conducting a research about its branding perspective internally and externally.</p> <p>In terms of the theory background for the research, the theoretical framework indicates how strong brands are built and the importance of having brand identity in order to enhance brand equity and brand awareness in different markets. The understanding of brand building concept and brand identity theory provides the scheme for the whole research. The questionnaires and interview questions therefore are designed in order to achieve the study objective: a foreign company needs to understand the local preferences in order to build its brand identity.</p> <p>In terms of research method, the qualitative and quantitative methods are used in order to approach the target audiences. The analysis of empirical findings collected from the survey questionnaires as well as via face-to-face interviews with Store Managers and Brand Manager provides the company the idea of how their brand identity is defined by the customers and the gaps the company needs to pay attention to build its brand identity in Vietnam as a foreign company.</p>	
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PREFACE

Firstly, I would like to dedicate this study to my family who is always there for me and supports me in every decision I have made. Being far away from them during my study time is always challenging me. However, I consider this fact as a great motivation for me in order to grow up on my own and live with my dreams confidently.

Secondly, I strongly appreciate what my Tutor Teacher as well as my Thesis Supervisor Ruey Komulainen who has been extremely supportive during my study in Kajaani University of Applied Sciences (KAMK) for not only being supportive in her courses, but also in guiding me for writing my thesis despite of her hectic working schedule.

Thirdly, I am also grateful to have supports from my Statistical Teacher Simo Määttä who helps me in dealing with statistics and figures that are crucial for the outcome of my thesis. Without his supports, my thesis would not achieve at this stage.

Lastly, being a part of KAMK community is one of the greatest achievements I have achieved in my life. Especially, with the unconditionally support from the International Affairs Planning Coordinator Kirsi Sievers, my student life is much more joyful and meaningful. In addition, I will never forget all the friendly faces and warm hearts of KAMK staffs who are there during my journey, without these amazing people, my student life would not mean this much.

Therefore, I am now so proud of saying that KAMK is my second home.

Table of Contents

1.	INTRODUCTION.....	2
1.1	The Pizza Company Background.....	2
1.2	Problem Statement	3
1.3	Research Objectives	3
1.4	Structure of the study	4
2.	A GLANCE AT THE FOOD AND BEVERAGE INDUSTRY IN VIETNAM ..	5
3.	THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	9
3.1	What is Branding?.....	9
3.2	What is Brand?.....	9
3.3	Introduction of Brand Elements	11
3.4	What The Marketing Benefits from Strong Brands	12
3.5	How to Build a Strong Brand.....	13
3.6	What Brand Identity really means	15
3.7	The Pizza Company Brand Identity	19
4.	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	23
4.1	Selection of the Research Methodology.....	23
4.2	Data Collection.....	23
4.3	Data Analysis	25
4.4	Validity and Reliability	25
5.	EMPIRICAL FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS	26
6	DISCUSSION OF EMPIRICAL FINDINGS.....	36
6.1	Research Question 1: What are crucial factors that influence on Vietnamese consumers' perception?	36
6.2	Research Question 2: How do Vietnamese customers react to pizza?	36
6.3	Research Question 3: How has The Pizza Company brand been perceived in Vietnam since 2013?.....	37

6.4 Research Question 4: What are the challenges that The Pizza Company has been facing in building its brand identity in Vietnam since 2013?37

7	CONCLUSION	40
7.1	Outcomes of the Research	40
7.2	Limitations of the Research and Suggestions for Future Research ...	41
7.2.1	Limitations of the Research	41
7.2.2	Suggestions for Future Research	41
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	42
	LIST OF APPENDICES.....	44

List of Figures and Tables

Figure 1. Revenue of Food & Beverage industry in Vietnam (in Euros) (Statista, April 2018)	5
Figure 2. Vietnam is a breakfast nation (Decision Lab, vietcetera.com)	6
Figure 3. Vietnamese consumers prefer to go out in group (Decision Lab, vietcetera.com)	7
Figure 4. Location is still the most important factor in restaurant choice (Decision Lab from vietcetera.com)	8
Figure 5. Definition of Branding (Kelly Hobkirk, 2012, trainofthought.net)	9
Figure 6. Definition of Brand (Kelly Hobkirk, 2012, trainofthought.net)	10
Figure 7. Criteria for Choosing Brand Elements (Keller, 2014, 142)	11
Figure 8. Strategic Brand Management Process (Keller, 2014, 59)	14
Figure 9. Brand Resonance Pyramid (Kotler & Keller, 2012, 249)	15
Figure 10. Brand Identity Planning Model (David A. Aaker, 2011)	17
Figure 11. The Pizza Company Brand Essence (The Pizza Company Brand Book)	20
Figure 12. Modified Likert Scale using in the Survey	24
Figure 13. Question 1. Among the following elements, how important are they to you when it comes to buy a product for the first time?	26
Figure 14. Question 2. Among the following elements, how important are they to you when it comes to repurchase the product?	28
Figure 15. Question 3. In Food and Beverage industry, which factors do you think are the key elements to make you come back next time?	29
Figure 16. Question 4. Do you see pizza as a fast food? (n=104)	30
Figure 17. Question 5. When it comes to pizza, which characteristics that pop-up in your mind?	30
Figure 18. Question 6. Which characteristics that The Pizza Company brand brings to you?	31
Figure 19. Question 7. Do you think The Pizza Company succeeds in providing high quality Italian cuisine inspiration dishes together with its professional services (the atmosphere and customer service) (n=104)	32
Table 1. Distinction between three related constructs (Aaker, 2011, 102)	16
Table 2. Brief transcripts of face-to-face interviews with The Pizza Company Store Managers.	33

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Pizza Company Background

Founded in Thailand, in the early 1980s, the first international pizza experience was brought to this nation by a company named The Pizza Company. Nearly two decades later, The Pizza Company, confronted with the 'big head' Pizza Hut to become the market leader who shared of over 95 per cent the market in Thailand. By understanding the local preferences, The Pizza Company sets apart from the competitor by offering its consumers not only fresh and innovative pizza approach, but also the fine dining experience. Undoubtedly, The Pizza Company is highly evaluated and adored as the best pizza brand in Thailand. (The Pizza Company Brand Book)

Statistics have shown the success of The Pizza Company with its 70 per cent collective shares in both Dine-In and Delivery segments. Since 2006, The Pizza Company has been owned by Minor International which is one of the largest companies in the hospitality and leisure industry in the Asia Pacific Region. (The Pizza Company, Minor International, Wikipedia 2018)

As the CEO Paul Kenny (2008) stated in the beginning of the Brand Book "This book is about our brand. It explains our core ideas. We are in the process of building something global and in this book you will find what lies at the heart of our brand and the foundation to continue building it". (The Pizza Company Brand Book)

In 2004, The Pizza Company decided to develop its franchise beyond the border. Therefore, in 2017, it operated the business in 11 countries.

The Pizza Company started launching its very first restaurant in Vietnam in 2007. However, it was franchised by a local company. Within 7 years in Vietnam market, this brand did not succeed in delivering its brand identity and its growth with only 3 restaurants operating so far. Therefore, by the end of 2013, it was bought by QSR Group under the strict observations by Minor International as the parent brand. Since then, The Pizza Company has been enhancing its shared market in Vietnam and increasing the locations up to 50 restaurants throughout the nation. In addition, it is placed as the second largest pizza brand after Pizza Hut in terms of Dine-In segment and the third biggest brand in Delivery segment after Domino's Pizza and Pizza Hut.

In order to differentiate itself from the key competitors, The Pizza Company keeps innovating its signature flavors with the local preferences. Hence, The Pizza Company clearly focuses on two target groups according to its tailored menu:

Primary group: 25-40 years old (high income officers);

Secondary group: between 18-24 and above 40 (students, couples, family and friends).

Since targeting to two specific customer groups as mentioned above, The Pizza Company has built and maintained its brand value in terms of 'passionate', 'creative', 'young-spirited', 'energetic' and 'uncompromising' that are truly inherited from the original Brand Book which is considered as the heart of this brand.

1.2 Problem Statement

The Pizza Company has been confronting difficulties in defining its brand identity. Specifically, what the brand really stands for and how it can build its brand identity in Vietnam.

Being the second place in Vietnam market after 4 years in developing is not enough for a multinational brand likes The Pizza Company. Therefore, it is essential to have a deeper look at what it has done and how to solve the challenges from the brand identity perspective in order to maintain its position as the leader in Vietnam market and achieve its mission as the best pizza brand in Vietnam by 2021.

1.3 Research Objectives

The aim of the study is to solve the stated problems in understanding the local preferences. Therefore, The Pizza Company needs to adjust its original brand identity in order to build the "local identity" for only Vietnamese customers.

By answering four research questions would help the company understand and define what brand identity it really wants to address:

Research Question 1: What are crucial factors that influence on Vietnamese consumers' perception?

Research Question 2: How do Vietnamese customers react to pizza?

Research Question 3: How has The Pizza Company brand been perceived in Vietnam since 2013?

Research Question 4: What are the challenges that The Pizza Company has been facing in building its brand identity in Vietnam since 2013?

1.4 Structure of the study

Chapter 1 presents The Pizza Company case study as an example of how a multinational brand identifies itself in Vietnam market, what kinds of challenges that need to take into account and how to solve them.

Chapter 2 provides readers a general idea about the current picture of Food & Beverage industry in Vietnam and the local consumers' preferences.

Chapter 3 presents the theory used throughout the study. This chapter provides the readers a basic branding knowledge in order to draw a general picture of how a brand is perceived and its crucial roles for a successful business from different perspectives.

Chapter 4 introduces the research methods used in the research. How data was collected and analysed in order to withdraw the reliability and validity of collected data.

Chapter 5 presents the findings in more details.

Chapter 6 introduces discussions and recommendations based on the empirical findings in order to provide the readers a holistic picture of the research.

Chapter 7 gives a conclusion of the study in terms of the final outcomes, limitations and suggestions for further research in the future.

2. A GLANCE AT THE FOOD AND BEVERAGE INDUSTRY IN VIETNAM

In the beginning of 20th century, franchising in Vietnam started with the three pioneers of fast food chain KFC, Lotteria, and Jollibee. Noticeably, between 2007 and 2016, there was 164 foreign franchises who brought 201 brands to Vietnam. This number shows that Vietnam has become a potential market for franchises. Since this nation is well-known for its young population which is 60 per cent of more than 93 million inhabitants are under 30 years old. In addition, there is an improvement in household income. Therefore, the national consumption has been increased sustainably. This positive growth is illustrated more clearly with the most updated figures from The Statistics Portal which estimates that the revenue of Food and Beverage (F&B) industry will reach to nearly 82 million euros in 2018 as the given table below (Statista,2018).

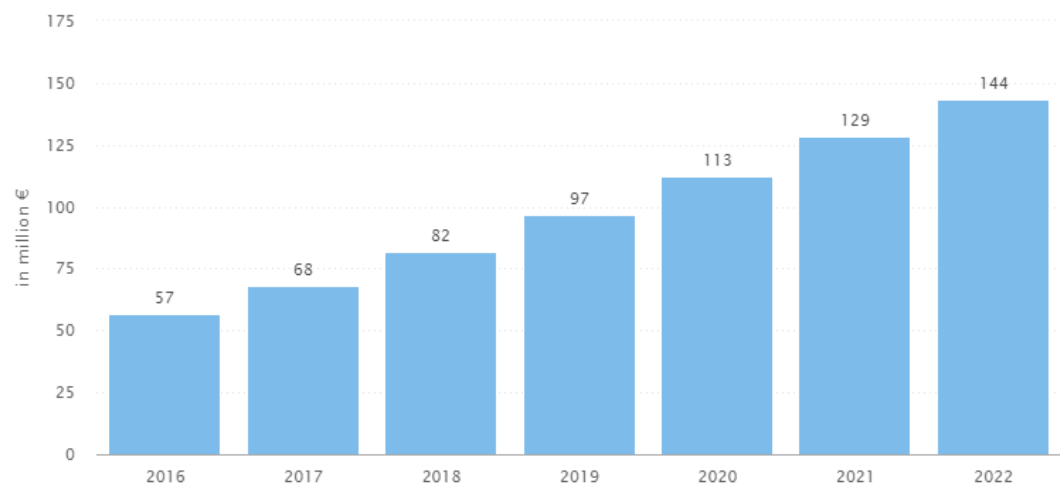


Figure 1. Revenue of Food & Beverage industry in Vietnam (in Euros) (Statista, April 2018)

More importantly, economists demonstrate that Vietnam is going to maintain its high GDP growth rate in the following years since the GDP keeps rising by 1 per cent annually. According to the Ministry of Industry and Trade, it is estimated that the consumption in F&B industry attributes up to 15 per cent of GDP. By 2020, Vietnam is expected to be the Top 3 Asian countries with the highest growth rate in this industry. In addition, the sector is forecasted to be one of the strongest industries in Asia within the period 2016 and 2019 by the Business Monitor International (VNA, english.vov.vn)

As Sean T. Ngo, CEO of VF Franchise Consulting and International representative of The Boiling Crab indicates “Similar products and services may be offered by local businesses, but the local competitors normally do not have the same standards and success model that is proven like international brands

that are here today". This also explains the fact that there is more and more international franchises investing in Vietnam market in order to provide the "unique set of products and services" (Yen Hai Nguyen, 2017, insideretail.asia).

In terms of food preferences, a study of Decision Lab, a market research firm from Hochiminh city shows that 35 per cent of Vietnamese who are out of home consumers is interested in Western food. As mentioned earlier, foreign companies are introducing new food products that tailored local tastes than their original menu. (Vietnam Briefing, 2017)

Vietnamese Consumers' Preferences

According to one of the most updated figures conducted by Decision Lab, it is shown that 'Vietnam is a breakfast nation'. In order to come to this conclusion, in the first three months in 2017, 30 per cent out of nearly 329 million visits to food service stores is for breakfast.

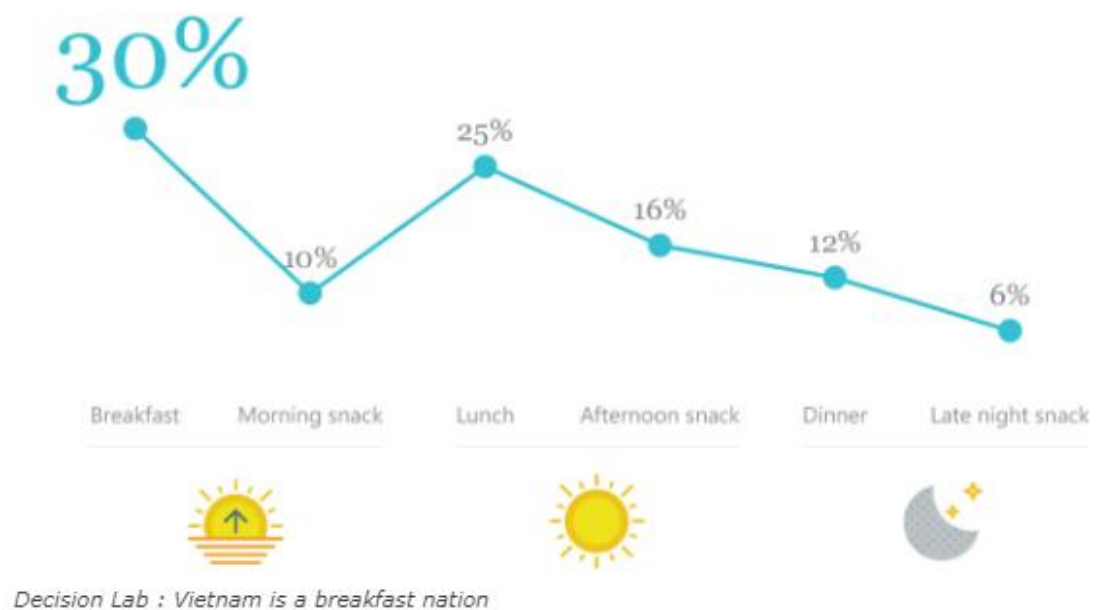


Figure 2. Vietnam is a breakfast nation (Decision Lab, vietcetera.com)

This fact does not surprise the locals, but it might do with foreign investors. However, there are three key reasons for that. Firstly, Vietnamese tend to look for something affordable of the Vietnamese cuisine such as banh mi, pho, and coffee. The convenience of locations is the second factor. And the third key factor is due to the growth of urban office lifestyle.

Another finding is that Vietnamese are collective people which means they prefer to go out with others. A survey on a sample size of 3322 participants conducted by Decision Lab shows that more than 60 per cent of Vietnamese consumers prefer not going out alone. This brings a valuable information to marketers in F&B industry that they should pay more attention in offering great deals to reach these consumers.

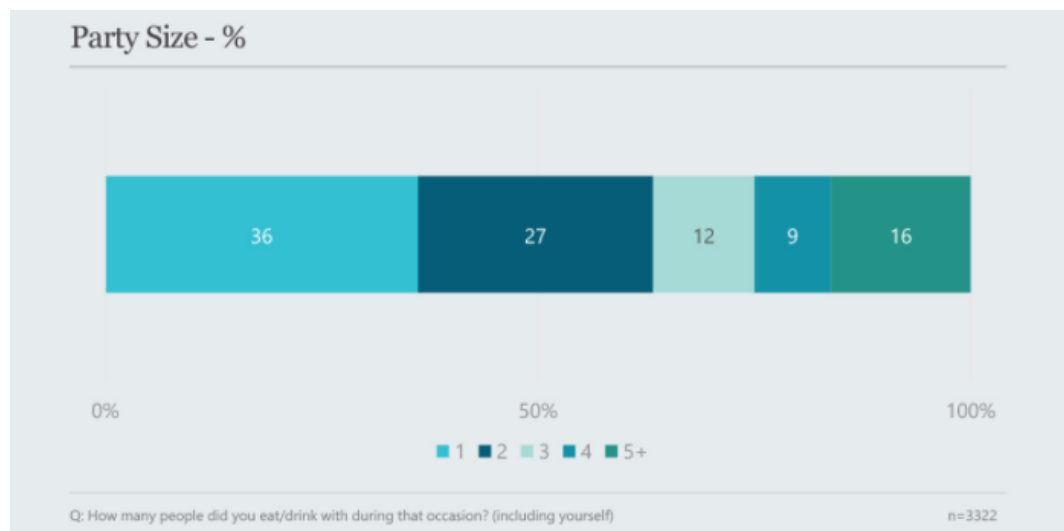


Figure 3. Vietnamese consumers prefer to go out in group (Decision Lab, vietcetera.com)

In terms of reasons for restaurant choice, location is one of the key factor besides others, such as quality of food, value for money or good service. Again, indicated by Decision Lab, it shows that more than 63 per cent of visits is because of its convenient location in 2017. Nevertheless, consumers are likely to pay 30 per cent more for the cleanliness, quality and taste of food than its location. (vietcetera.com)

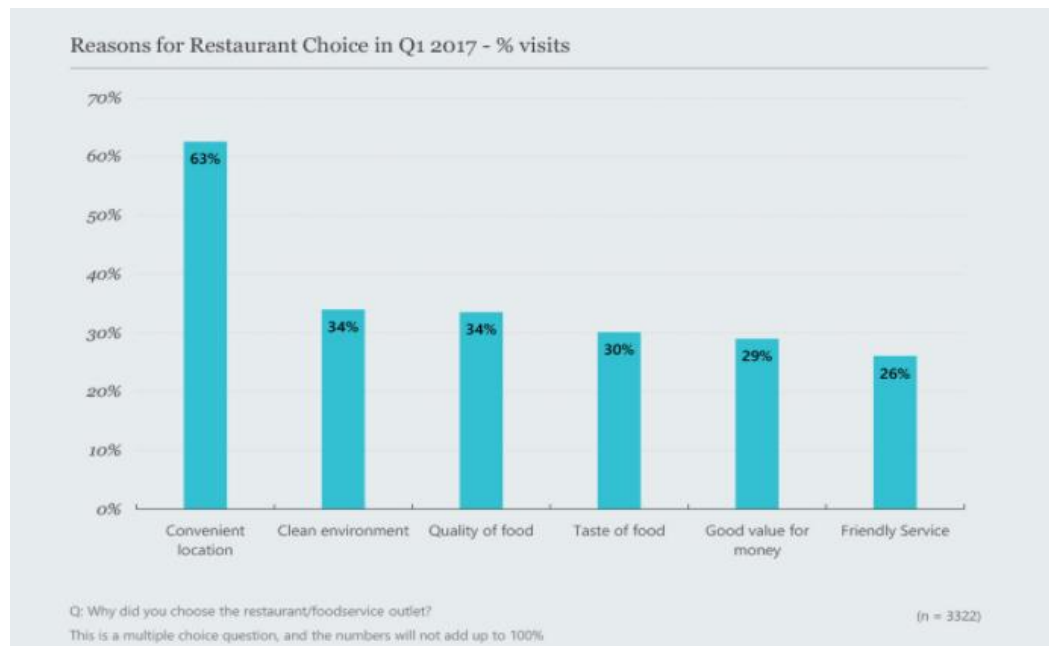


Figure 4. Location is still the most important factor in restaurant choice (Decision Lab from vietcetera.com)

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 What is Branding?

Back to 1300 B.C, marks were done on the early Chinese porcelain, on goods from India or even on jars from ancient Greece and Rome in order to distinguish the owners of these products. This fact indicates that branding has been existing for centuries (Keller, 61, 2014). Simply speaking, branding is an action of creating a brand. In other words, branding is a verb.

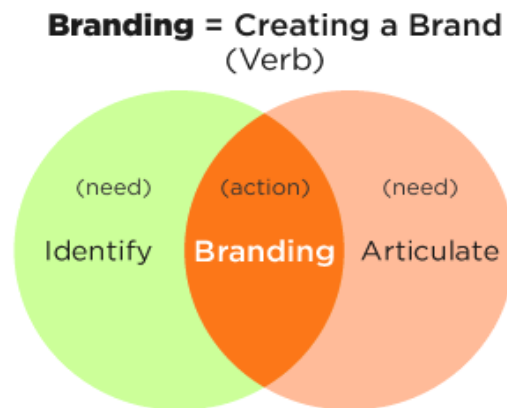


Figure 5. Definition of Branding (Kelly Hobkirk,2012, trainofthought.net)

3.2 What is Brand?

According to the American Marketing Association (AMA), a brand is a “name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competition” (Keller, 2014,30). Nevertheless, a brand is much more than that. It is also a combination of many other crucial elements such as awareness, reputation, promises that customers see from an organization. Brand, therefore, is a marketing tool (Kelly,2012).



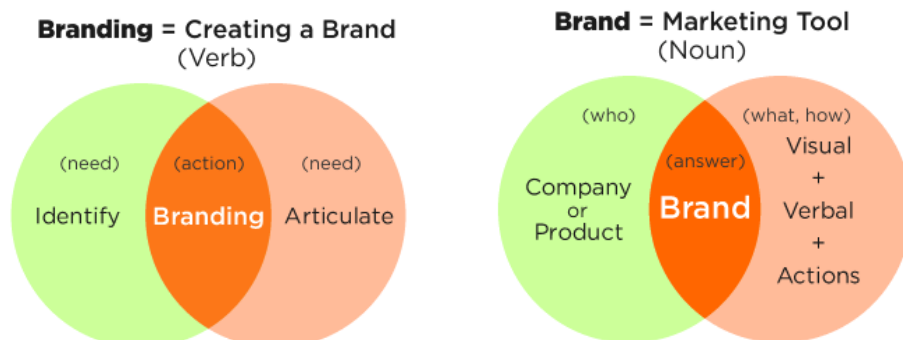
Figure 6. Definition of Brand (Kelly Hobkirk, 2012, trainofthought.net)

In addition, in 1991, Aaker defined that “A brand is a distinguishing name and/or symbol intended to identify the goods or services of one seller from those of competitors” (Kapferer,2012,11).

The well-known marketing scholar Keller (1998) states the traditional brand definition “a brand is a set of mental associations, held by the consumer, which add to the perceived value of a product or service”. However, Kapferer (2012) stated “These associations should be unique (exclusive), strong (saliency) and positive (desirable)”. Furthermore, the scholar indicated that this traditional definition had two problems: “First it focuses on the gain in the perceived value brought by the brand. A second one is focused on cognitions which is not enough since strong brands have an intense emotional component which is proved by the neurosciences” (Kapferer,2012,8).

The importance of distinguishing the differences between brand and branding

There are many different definitions of brand and branding. Hence, it is easy to get confused between these terms. The confusion can lead to the misunderstanding in identifying and building brands which is unhealthy for any organization. Therefore, it is extremely crucial to differentiate the differences between these words. By placing two mentioned illustrations next to each other, it becomes easier to see that brand is a core marketing tool which a company uses to ‘creating their brand’ via the action of branding in order to identify themselves with their competitors and therefore, enhance their competitive advantages.



3.3 Introduction of Brand Elements

As mentioned previously, a brand involves a variety of different components, such as brand names, logos, symbols, designs, and others. These factors are called brand elements. There are six different criteria of brand elements that marketers can choose from:

- 1. Memorable**
Easily recognized
Easily recalled
- 2. Meaningful**
Descriptive
Persuasive
- 3. Likable**
Fun and interesting
Rich visual and verbal imagery
Aesthetically pleasing
- 4. Transferable**
Within and across product categories
Across geographic boundaries and cultures
- 5. Adaptable**
Flexible
Updatable
- 6. Protectable**
Legally
Competitively

Figure 7. Criteria for Choosing Brand Elements (Keller,2014,142)

In terms of memorability, it is recommended that brand names should be easy to recall or recognize. This will bring to a high level of brand awareness.

Meaningfulness in either a descriptive or persuasive way to delivering the content to target customers. It therefore, can be a general functional information of a specific product or service. It also can be specific information related to the attribution and benefits of the brand.

Likability is different from the memorability and meaningfulness.

Transferability estimates the extent when it comes to the brand elements adds to the brand equity for new products or in new markets. This element is carefully considered in its logistics “the less specific the name, the more easily it can be transferred across categories”, “across geographic boundaries and market segments” or cultural content due to the difference in languages.

Adaptability is the fifth concern for brand elements. Due to the changes in values and opinions of consumers, the brand element needs to be adaptable and flexible. Hence, this will help the brand elements easier to update along with the target market.

More importantly, the brand element needs to be protected in internationally legal and competitive perspective. Noticeably, if a brand name or a package design is very easy to imitate, unavoidably it will lose the uniqueness of the brand. (Keller,2014,146-147)

3.4 What The Marketing Benefits from Strong Brands

There are many advantages that the marketing can get from a strong brand both in increasing revenue and reducing cost. Since having a strong brand, the organization gets higher level of awareness and a good brand image. In more details, these benefits can be categorized into six following dimensions:

Greater Loyalty and Less Vulnerability to Competitive Marketing Actions and Crisis which means consumers would feel great loyalty to the brand. This gains the brand loyalty. Therefore, it creates a sustainable flow of revenues for the organization. Having a positive brand image also helps a brand be able to avoid brand crisis or brand downturn in its fortunes. (Keller,2014,99)

Larger Margins which comes to command a price premium. A study indicates that loyal customers are likely to stay with the brand instead of switching to others when the price increases and likely to purchase more when the price reduces. (Keller,2014,99)

Greater Trade Cooperation and Support in the distribution channel, wholesalers, retailers, and middlemen are key players in selling products. Therefore, the activities of these players somehow influence on the success of the brand. With a positive brand image, retailers and middlemen tend to satisfy the consumers wishes and be more active in promoting and selling brand. Channel players, therefore, are less likely in demanding marketing push from the manufacturer and are more willing with manufacturers' suggestions in terms of stock, reorder, brand display, and so on. (Keller,2014,99)

Increase Marketing Communication Effectiveness. Having a positive brand image and brand awareness, marketers can gain advantages in advertising and communication. (Keller,2014,100)

Possible Licensing and Brand Extension Opportunities. A strong brand often associates with other product categories. "...a firm may choose to license its name, logo, or other trademark item to another company for use on its products and merchandise. The rational for the license (the company obtaining the rights to use the trademark) is that consumers will pay more for a product because of the recognition and image lent by the trademark". In terms of opportunity, the brand extensions help the parent brand strengthen its associations. In addition, it is more likely to receive better initial stock market reactions over other brands. (Keller,2014,100)

Other Benefits such as the firm can attract and motivate its employees better, getting greater interests from investors, and more supportive actions from shareholders. (Keller,2014,99-100)

3.5 How to Build a Strong Brand

"Building a strong brand is both an art and a science". It needs to plan carefully, have a deep commitment in long term perspective, design creatively, and conduct executed marketing. The heart of a strong brand is its product or service which drives to the loyal of consumers. (Kotler&Keller,2012,241)

Therefore, in order to build a strong brand, the first element is to understand the customers in terms of emotional attributes by providing memorable experience for them. Secondly, a strong brand is the one who is able to speak to the consumers. The most importantly, it needs to convey thoughts, but not messages which makes it becomes critical. It is even more important at how to communicate to the customers after their first purchase. It brings to the customers a belief that the company cares and values them. Lastly, in terms of communication, listening is truly vital. It enables the company or the brand itself have a better understanding towards its customers in building the customer relationship.

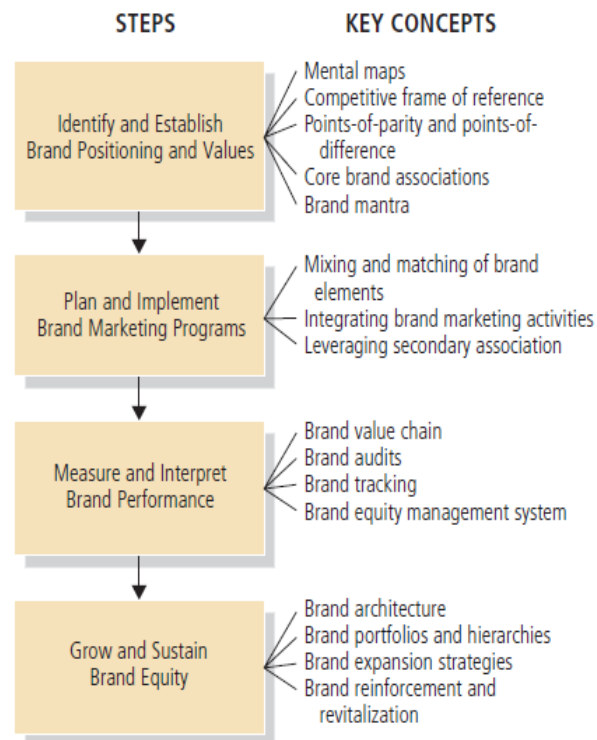


Figure 8. Strategic Brand Management Process (Keller, 2014,59)

In order to have a strong brand, it should be strongly aligned with a strong brand management action. Hence, it is vital to study and understand the strategic brand management process. In more details, the process comprises four significant steps as following:

- Step 1: Identifying and developing brand plans;
- Step 2: Designing and implementing brand marketing programs;
- Step 3: Measuring and interpreting brand performance;
- Step 4: Growing and sustaining brand equity.

In order to do so, the first step needs to be take into action accurately. Otherwise, it would lead to the poor performance of brand equity . And obviously, the organization has to go back to the first step in order to redefine and rebuild their brand identity.

3.6 What Brand Identity really means

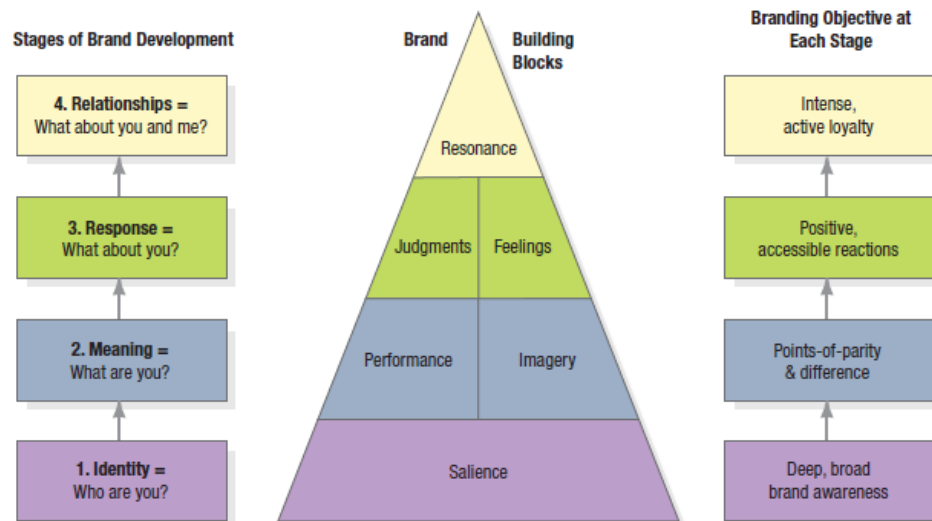


Figure 9. Brand Resonance Pyramid (Kotler&Keller,2012,249)

From the Brand Resonance Pyramid, it is easy to have a holistic picture of where the brand stands at and what the brand objective at each stage. Brand salience is the foundation stone of the brand building blocks. It indicates how often and how easily customers can think of the brand in any circumstances in terms of purchase and consumption. In order words, the brand needs to be identified its identity in order to have a deep and broad knowledge of brand awareness. This reflects how important the brand identity is in a process of achieving the final brand goal in terms of having intense and active loyalty of consumers.

Most importantly, in order to understand the concept 'brand identity', it is essential to define what identity is. Simply speaking, identity helps a subject being the true-self, unique and value. According to Kapferer (2012), similarly, brand identity would be clearly defined if the following key questions are solved:

- What is the brand's particular vision and aim?
- What makes it different?
- What need is the brand fulfilling?
- What is its permanent crusade?
- What are its value or values?
- What is its field of competence? Or legitimacy?

Hence, building brand identity is a process which requires a deep knowledge of the target market since it should be tailored based on customers' preferences.

In addition, it is also important to understand brand image and its vital role in providing useful and fundamental information when developing a brand identity. Brand image is a reflection of a brand which is hold in consumer memory. In other words, it is about how the brand is perceived by its customers (Aaker,2011,100).

Brand position is another crucial factor which needs to take into consideration in building brand identity. It is a part of brand identity and value proposition that is need to be active in communicating to the customers and therefore, it indicates an advantage over its competing brands. Thus, it is vital to differentiate the concepts of brand image, brand identity, and brand position in order to avoid misunderstanding these related constructs in building brands. The distinction is illustrated clearly and briefly in the table below. (Aaker, 2011, 99-102)

Table 1. Distinction between three related constructs (Aaker, 2011,102)

BRAND IMAGE	BRAND IDENTITY	BRAND POSITION
How the brand is now perceived	How strategists want the brand to be perceived	The part of the brand identity and value proposition to be actively communicated to a target audience

When it comes to brand identity, there are two well-known models that illustrate and provide crystal guidance to identify and build brand identity: Brand Identity Planning Model from David A. Aaker (2011) and Brand Identity Prism Model from Jean-Noël Kapferer (2008). Due to the purpose of this study, the Brand Identity Planning Model is chosen in order to support for the study in helping The Pizza Company clarify its challenges and enhance its knowledge to build the brand identity in Vietnam. This study therefore stays focused on Brand Identity System which it is considered as the heart of the model. It comprises Brand Identity, Value Proposition, Credibility and Brand-Customer relationship.

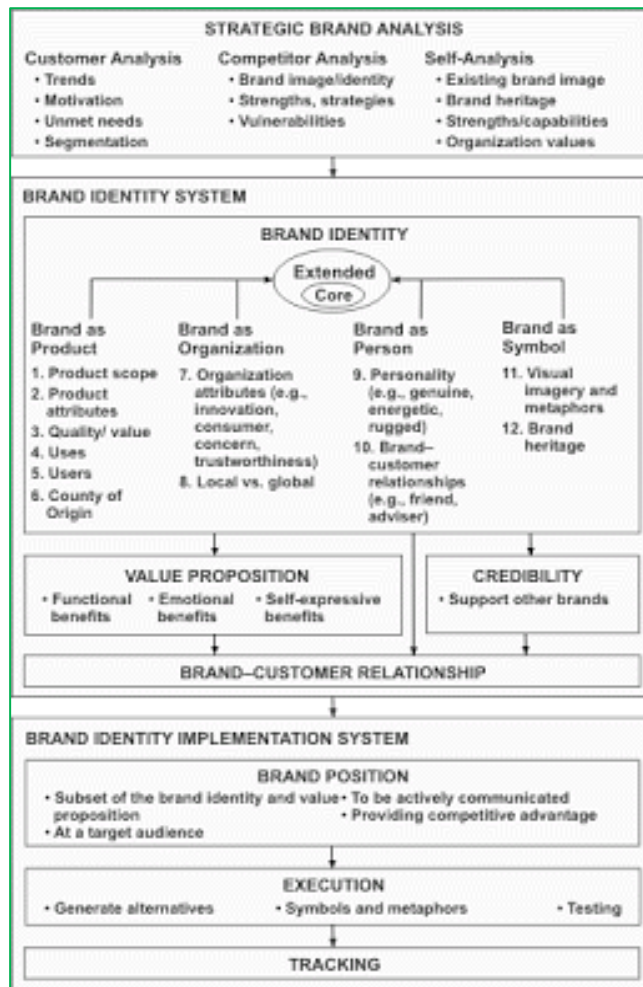


Figure 10. Brand Identity Planning Model (David A. Aaker, 2011)

Aaker (2011) states “Brand identity is a unique set of brand associations that the brand strategists aspires to create or maintain. These associations represent what the brand stands for and imply a promise to customers from the organization member. Brand identity should help establish a relationship between the brand and the customer by generating a value proposition involving functional, emotional or self-expressive benefits”. Moreover, building a brand identity is more than just acknowledging what customers want, but it also has to reflect the soul and vision of the brand (Aaker, 2011, 100). The brand identity is the heart of a potential set of brand association that provide the brand strategist a whole picture of the firm’s brands. It conveys the brand’s messages to the customers and assert the firm’s promise to the customers. Therefore, the brand identity should enforce the customers buying decision as well as the brand-customers relationship in term of delivering the superior value proposition including functional benefits, emotional benefits and self-expressive benefits.

In terms of structure, brand identity comprises a core and an extended identity. Specifically, the core identity is seen as the central, timeless essence of the brand. In other words, the core identity is still

remained despite of its brand entering in new markets or launching new products. In contrast, the extended identity which includes brand identity elements can be adjusted or redesigned according to the needs of markets where the brand is operated (Aaker, 2011,99).

Therefore, in order to have texture and depth of the brand identity, an organization needs to consider it as four different perspectives with twelve dimensions introduced as following:

Brand as a Product: Product related associations that are directly driven to brand choice decisions and the use experience.

The Product Scope: the associations with product class. “A core element of a brand identity is usually its product thrust, which will affect the type of associations that are desirable and feasible” (Aaker, 2011, 113).

Product Related Attributes: which creates a value proposition via providing something better or something extra. Therefore, it helps the brand enhance its value and distinctiveness over the competitors.

Quality/Value: the quality factor is one of product related attribute. The perceived quality provides the price of admission and the core of competition. Value element is closely aligned to quality. It enhances the concept by adding the price dimension.

Associations with Use Occasion: this dimension differentiates the brand with a particular use or application over its competitors.

Associations with Users: having a strong type position of user can contribute a value proposition and a brand personality to the brand.

Link to a Country or Region: having associations with a country or a region, this enables a brand provide the customers with higher quality due to the reputation of making the best product class of the country or region. (Aaker, 2011, 113-116)

Brand as an Organization: which concentrates on attributes of the organization such as innovation, a drive for quality, and the environment concerns created by people, culture, values, and programs of the company. It is more resistant than the product attributes.

Brand as a Person: like a person, a brand is perceived with its personality as “being upscale, competent, impressive, trustworthy, fun, active, humorous, casual, formal, youthful, or intellectual”

(Aaker, 2011, 118). Therefore, a brand personality can create strong brand by providing self-expressive benefits, functional benefits, and relationships to its customers.

Brand as a Symbol: having a strong symbol enables the brand to enhance its recognition and recall among others. Symbols include visual imagery which can be memorable and powerful. In addition, symbols are more meaningful with a metaphor which represents functional, emotional, or self-expressive benefits of the brand. Thus, it can be seen as a cornerstone of a brand strategy. (Aaker, 2011, 120-121)

As mentioned earlier, the brand identity needs to provide its customers a value proposition which is “a statement of the functional, emotional, and self-expressive benefits delivered by the brand that provide value to the customer. An effective value proposition should lead to a brand-customer relationship and drive purchase decision” (Aaker, 2011, 134). Functional benefits are benefits based on a product attribute while emotional benefits give customers positive feeling towards the brand. Hence, strongest brand identities are often occupied with functional and emotional benefits. Another element of the brand value proposition is self-expressive benefits that enable customers to communicate with their self-images.

The bottom line of the Brand Identity System is a brand customer relationship which can be based upon the value proposition.

3.7 The Pizza Company Brand Identity

The core identity: represents the consistent value of a brand, remains the brand meaning, purpose and direction even when it makes a new expansion strategic in a new market. This element should be unique, valuable and especially full-fledged to capture the value proposition as well as be a strong credibility of its sub-brand. CEO of The Pizza Company, Paul Kenny (2008) stated “To be successful, we must adopt a brand position that customers’ value and identify with. We require a set of values and a vision that customers find motivating and one that we are seen to be committed to and deliver against”. As it is indicated in the Brand Guideline, the core identity is the consistent value of the brand: **passionate** in delivering excellent products; **creative** in trying new ideas and approaches; **young** and **energetic** spirits at bringing out the best in staffs, making them more enthusiastic about serving the customers; **uncompromising** at never serving anything less than perfection. In other words, the brand needs to maintain its core identity in different markets with different products. Since it is considered as the soul of the brand. Therefore, The Pizza Company needs to take this into consideration when building its brand identity in Vietnam.

The extended identity: comprises the factors and tools that provide more details about the brand identity which fills in the blank of the big picture of the firm's brand identity by implementing the brand personality, marketing communication program in which it appeals the firm's brand association. The extended identity comprises four vital dimensions:

- Brand as Product
- Brand as Organization
- Brand as Person
- Brand as Symbol



Figure 11. The Pizza Company Brand Essence (The Pizza Company Brand Book)

Brand as Product: Product is seen as a core factor of a brand identity which gives functional and emotional values for customers. At The Pizza Company, the organization determines:

- Local favourite pizza taste;
- Wide variety of choices with signature flavours;
- Fresh and high quality ingredients;
- Eye-popping food presentation;
- Value for money.

Brand as Organization: which reflects contributions of an organization rather than its products or services, such as its contribution as an innovation which brings more benefits for its customers in terms of quality and environment. The Pizza Company determines itself as:

- Passionate about Italian cuisine;
- Customer oriented;
- Efficient and systematic;
- Creative;
- Innovative thinking.

Brand as Person: like a person, a brand has its own personality which is unique. Therefore, from this perspective, it gives ideas for organizations to build their own and unique brand identity that help them differentiate themselves and maintain one step ahead from its competitors. As a person, The Pizza Company wants to be perceived as a young humble man who is passionate about the Italian cuisine, insightful with quality conscious and always be creative and approachable.

Brand as Symbol: as mentioned earlier, brand is a set of perception. Hence, customers can recognize their favorite brand via its logo, design, color that relate to visual things. The Pizza Company brand is designed with the oval-shaped logo; “THE PIZZA” voice over via television campaign and it is set with the Italian-inspired graphic icons.

Value Proposition presents values that customers get benefits from a brand under the functional, emotional and self-expressive elements. *The Pizza Company sends the message* as “The most favorite pizza and Italian-inspired food brand serving the most enjoyable, casual, Italian-inspired meal for all lifestyle occasions” (The Pizza Company Brand Book).

Functional Benefits based on the attributions of a product or a service which is the main tangible values that customers can see, touch and feel. The Pizza Company provides high quality products with its fast and friendly service for both dine-in and delivery segments.

Emotional Benefits are seen as promises that a brand make to its customers. Hence, keeping and delivery the promise to customers is a key factor in order to create and communicate a credible brand identity. The Pizza Company has been delivering a message to its customers as a place where the

customers not only enjoy high quality foods, but also sharing the cherish memories with their loved ones in every occasion.

Self-Expressive Benefits which allow customers to express themselves through the brand they are using. Inspiring by Italian culture, The Pizza Company brings benefits to its customers in experiencing the Italian cuisine as high class customers.

Customer Relationship brings values not only for the organization in terms of saving costs and enhanced business performance, but also for the customers. Nevertheless, The Pizza Company is improving the relationships with its customers via reorganizing the customer service training program as well as conducting surveys in order to better understanding its customers and satisfy them more in terms of functional benefits by offering various options such as BOGO (Buy 1 Get 1 every Tuesdays and Wednesdays), Happy Now campaign for lunch or special offers for the customers. In terms of emotional benefits, The Pizza Company provides 'share moments' to its customers with attractive set combos that available for couples and family. It brings the happiness to the customers via memorable experiences they have with their loved ones.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Selection of the Research Methodology

Quantitative and Qualitative Research

The purpose of this research is to understand the customers' perception towards the brand identity of The Pizza Company and how "the insiders" perceive and build the brand identity. In other words, the research is an examination to see whether the brand builders and branding message transformers really understand the market and the message which is delivered in order to match with the customers' expectations. Hence, both quantitative and qualitative research methods are conducted. These selected methods would make the collected data more transparent, reliable and simple to conduct in a larger population later on, which plays a crucial role to help foreign organizations to better understanding their invested markets in terms of building brand identity.

Therefore, a fixed questionnaire with closed-ended questions is chosen that lead to the usage of different statistical analysis tools. Besides that, open interviewed questions are designed according to two target groups-Store Managers and the Brand Manager. The selected data is more objective based on the standard designed questionnaire. And the limited variables of answers in the survey questions allow the research is easier to managed.

4.2 Data Collection

Customers from the three random selected The Pizza Company restaurants, as well as the Store Managers and the Brand Manager is the target in this research. The questionnaire survey was carried out for three days in different shifts in order to have a better general knowledge of the customers, as well as to make sure the respondents are variety. Within the 104 respondents, there are 43 officers, 41 students, 4 housewives, 14 self-employees and 2 others.

The customers were directly asked to fill in the survey questions during their visiting time in the restaurants, as the approval and assistance were given by the Brand Manager and Store Managers beforehand. The direct approach makes sure the response rate to be as close to 100 per cent as possible with the sample size approximately 150. However, due to the raining days and uncontrolled numbers of customers willing to answer the questionnaire. At the end of the day, there is only 104 response out of 150 printed questionnaire samples and four face-face interviews with three Store Managers and the Brand Manager was fully accomplished.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire and interview questions were designed only in Vietnamese due to the target customers and interviewees are all Vietnamese. On the other hand, the documents were translated into English by the author and approved by the Brand Manager in order to assure the highly trusted content compared to the original Vietnamese version. In addition, these questions need to be attached at the end of this research which is written in English. After being approved by the Brand Manager, the survey was conducted within three days as mentioned in the data collection part previously.

The questionnaire survey was designed to have 7 main questions and one open-ended question as the conclusion; 2 among of which are Yes/No questions and the other 5 questions include 22 sub-questions in total. In the 5 questions that contain sub-questions, respondents were asked to give their opinion on 1-5 scale ranking; the ranking is under 'unimportant' to 'very important' and 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. The estimated time to complete the survey was between 3 and 5 minutes.

Strongly Disagree/Unimportant	Disagree/Of little important	Neutral/Moderately important	Agree/Important	Strongly Agree/Very important
1	2	3	4	5

Figure 12. Modified Likert Scale using in the Survey

The survey is conducted in Vietnamese. The translated English version can be found in Appendix 1, and the Vietnamese version can be found in Appendix 2.

Since face-to-face interview enables researchers to have in depth exploration opinions towards a certain problem. However, it might be costly and time consuming to conduct. But in some cases, face-to-face interview can be the most effective way to collect data. Therefore, in terms of qualitative data collecting in this study, face-to-face interviews were selected since this method gains high response rate due to the maximized engagement with the respondents that lead to a rich collected information (Mooi and Sarstedt, 2011, 54). Thus, along with the questionnaire survey, interviews were carried out with three Store Managers and the Brand Manager. Since there were two different groups of interviewees, therefore, two lists of interview questions were designed according to the differences. Each interview was estimated to complete approximately from 20 to 25 minutes with 6 questions for each Store Manager and 5 questions for the Brand Manager.

4.3 Data Analysis

Using descriptive statistics (minimum, maximum, range) enable researchers to deal with data entry errors, typing errors, survey non-response and item non-response. In addition, since data can be described either univariate descriptive (one variable at each time) or bivariate descriptive (the relationship between two variables). These two descriptives are demonstrated into graphs, charts, tables and statistics. Hence, within this study, descriptive statistics is selected in each question in order to find out the frequency distribution of each variable and relationships between two variables. According to characteristics of each variable, the frequency distribution is illustrated either in figures or percentages. (Mooi and Sarstedt,2011,81-83)

“Qualitative research is mostly used to gain understanding of why certain things happen or to work on developing measures. There are ethical issues associated with conducting research in which the participants are not aware of the research purpose. The two key forms of directly observed qualitative data are interviews and focus groups” (Mooi and Sarstedt,2011,69). Due to the objectives of this study, the interview form was selected. The four interviews were recorded and carefully translated into English in order to assure the highly valuable and reliability results.

4.4 Validity and Reliability

In case, all the hypotheses are related perfectly, which means the actual measurement is same as what is intended to measure, then there has no measurement error. In contrast, the measurement error occurs and can be defined into a systematic and a random error. Both concepts of the systematic and random error are crucial since they impact on the measure of validity and reliability. “Validity refers to whether we are measuring what we want to measure and, therefore, to a situation where the systematic error is zero. Reliability is the degree to which what we measure is free from random error and, therefore, relates to a situation where the random error is zero”. (Mooi and Sarstedt,2011,34)

5. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

A questionnaire survey was conducted in order to answer the RQ1, RQ2 and RQ3 (partially). And face-to-face interviews were collected to address problems in RQ3 (partially) and RQ4 from the insight perspective. More precisely, as described earlier, the survey comprises 7 close-ended questions and 1 open question as a conclusion. Within each question, some sub-questions were designed to lead to more concrete and accurate answer. The findings are demonstrated more specifically in graphs done by Excel as given below:

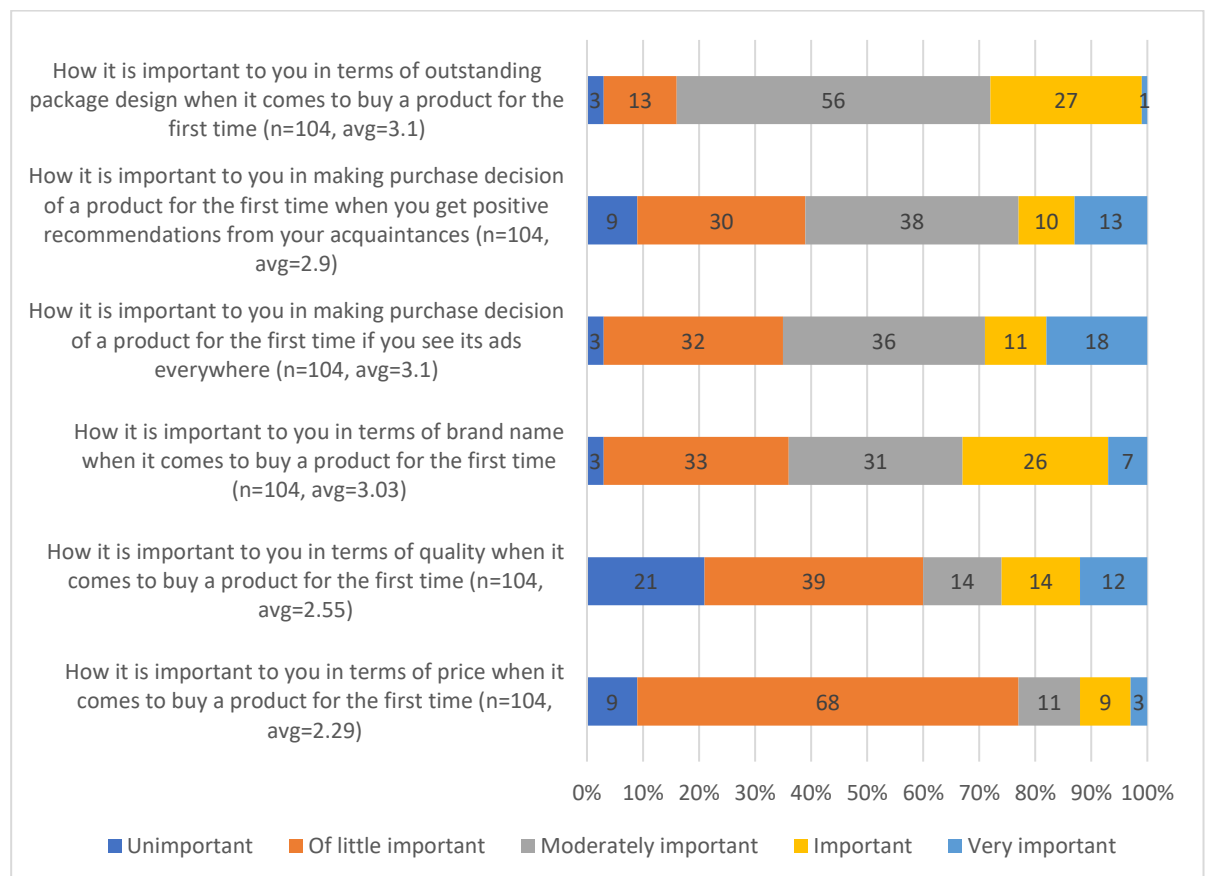


Figure 13. Question 1. Among the following elements, how important are they to you when it comes to buy a product for the first time?

The frequency table above indicates that nearly 40 per cent of 104 respondents do not think quality is the key element for them in making purchase decision for the first time. While there is only 14 per cent of respondents think it is important.

In terms of price, there is only 9 per cent of respondents agree that it is a crucial element for them when it comes to buy a new product for the first time. In contrast, there are 68 per cent of respondents think it is a little important.

When it comes to aesthetic perspective, nearly 56 per cent of respondents show their interests, while there is only 27 per cent of them think the outstanding package design of the product can caught their attention in the first time purchase.

Brand name of a product is quite important for the customers when almost 33 per cent of respondents agree that this element is a little important while 31 per cent and 26 per cent think that it is moderately important and important respectively.

The importance of seeing ads everywhere of a new product does not have any strong impact on the customers in making their purchase for the first time. Specifically, there is 18 per cent out of 104 respondents agree that it is really important, meanwhile more than 36 per cent of respondents think this is moderately important.

In addition, getting positive recommendations from acquaintances is not really crucial for respondents in making buying decision for the first time. In more details, there is only 13 per cent of respondent think it is very important, while more than 37 per cent out of 104 respondents does not strongly agree with that.

The majority of respondents, 56 per cent and 31 per cent, think brand name and package design of the product play moderately important role in their making buying decision. Most noticeably, accounts more than other factors, 18 per cent of respondents think seeing ads everywhere about the product is very important that influence on their decision making for the first time.

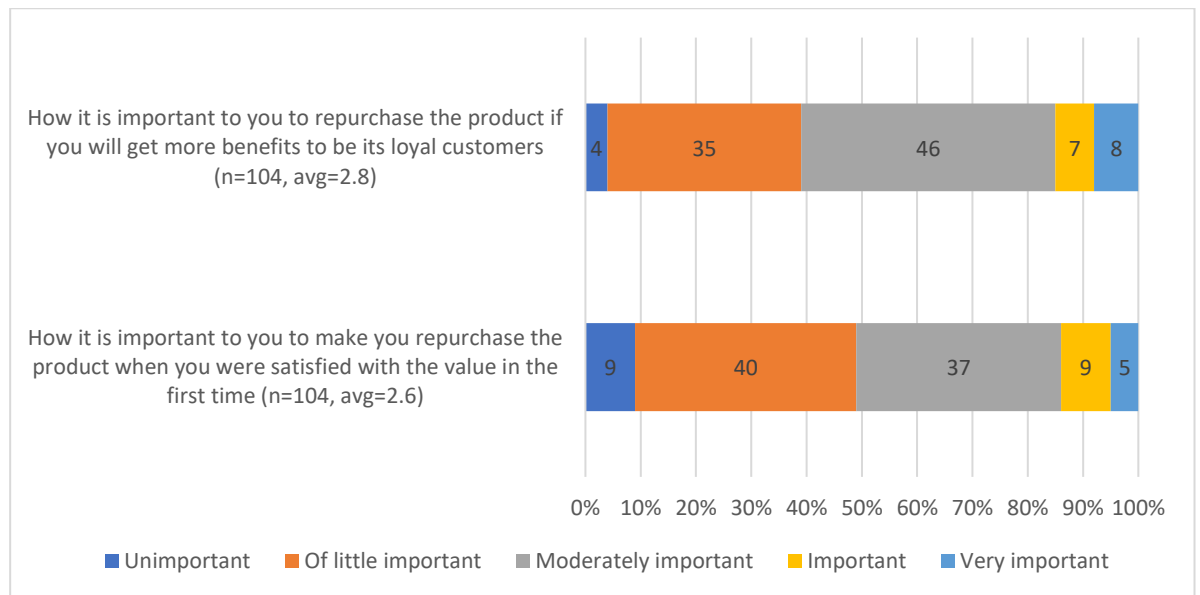


Figure 14. Question 2. Among the following elements, how important are they to you when it comes to repurchase the product?

The figure above represents that getting benefits from the loyal customers program is more important than satisfy with the value in the past purchase, which accounts for 46 per cent versus only 37 per cent. However, respondents seem not to concern much these values to make them repurchase next time. In more details, there is only 8 per cent think loyal customers program is a very important factor while roughly 5 per cent agree on the value satisfaction they get in the past.

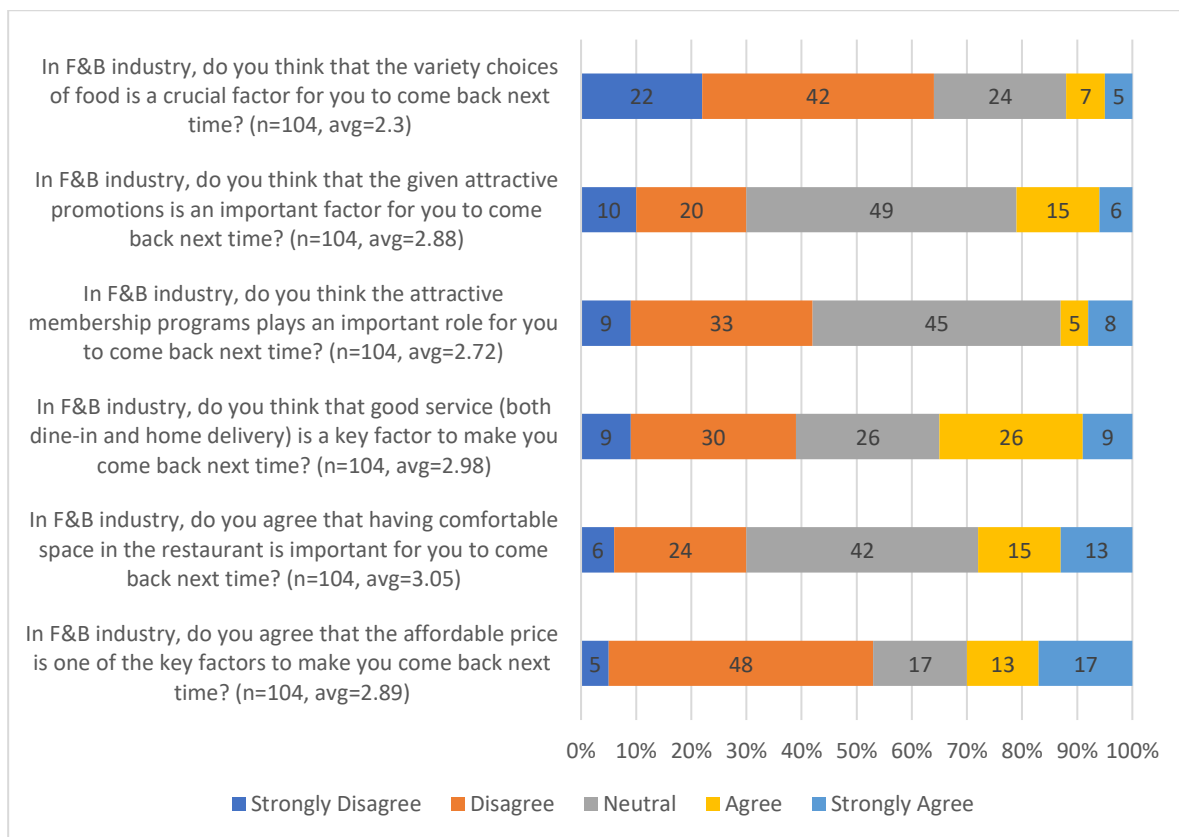


Figure 15. Question 3. In Food and Beverage industry, which factors do you think are the key elements to make you come back next time?

The figure demonstrates that in F&B industry, receiving good service is the most crucial factor which makes customers revisit restaurants next time. Specifically, this accounts for 26 per cent compare to nearly 5 per cent agree on membership programs, 7 per cent on the variety choices of food and the affordable price 13 per cent.

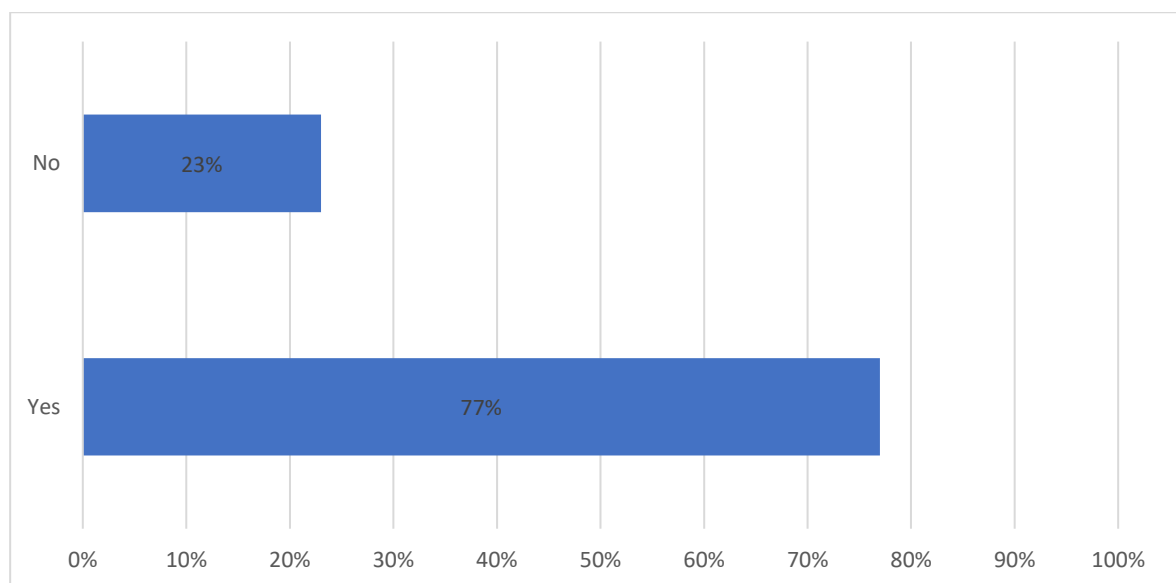


Figure 16. Question 4. Do you see pizza as a fast food? (n=104)

The table above shows that most of respondents agree with the fact that pizza is a fast food, which accounts for 77 per cent, more than 3 times compare to only 24 respondents think it is not a fast food.

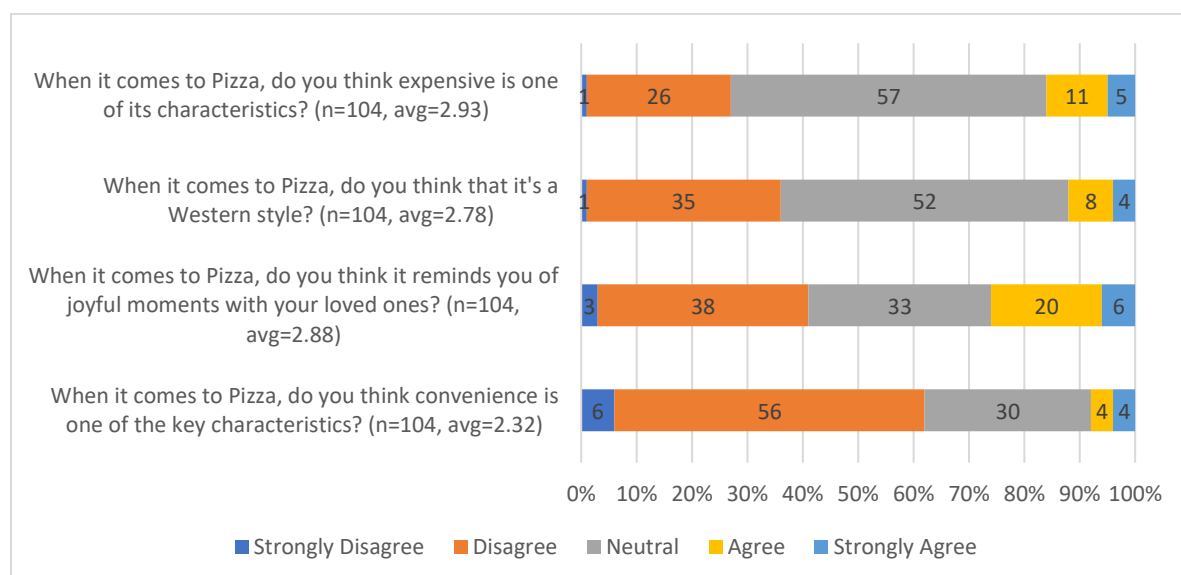


Figure 17. Question 5. When it comes to pizza, which characteristics that pop-up in your mind?

The shown figure indicates that nearly 52 per cent of respondents does not think pizza represents for Western style neither as an expensive food 57 per cent in neutral which is neither agree nor disagree. On the other hand, about 20 per cent agree that pizza is the food that they often share with their loved ones. Most noticeably, 56 per cent of respondents does not agree that pizza as a convenient food.

Statistics from question 4 and 5 have shown that most of Vietnamese think pizza is a fast food which is not really affordable, but also not expensive. More importantly, having pizza represents sharing moments with the loved ones of the customers.

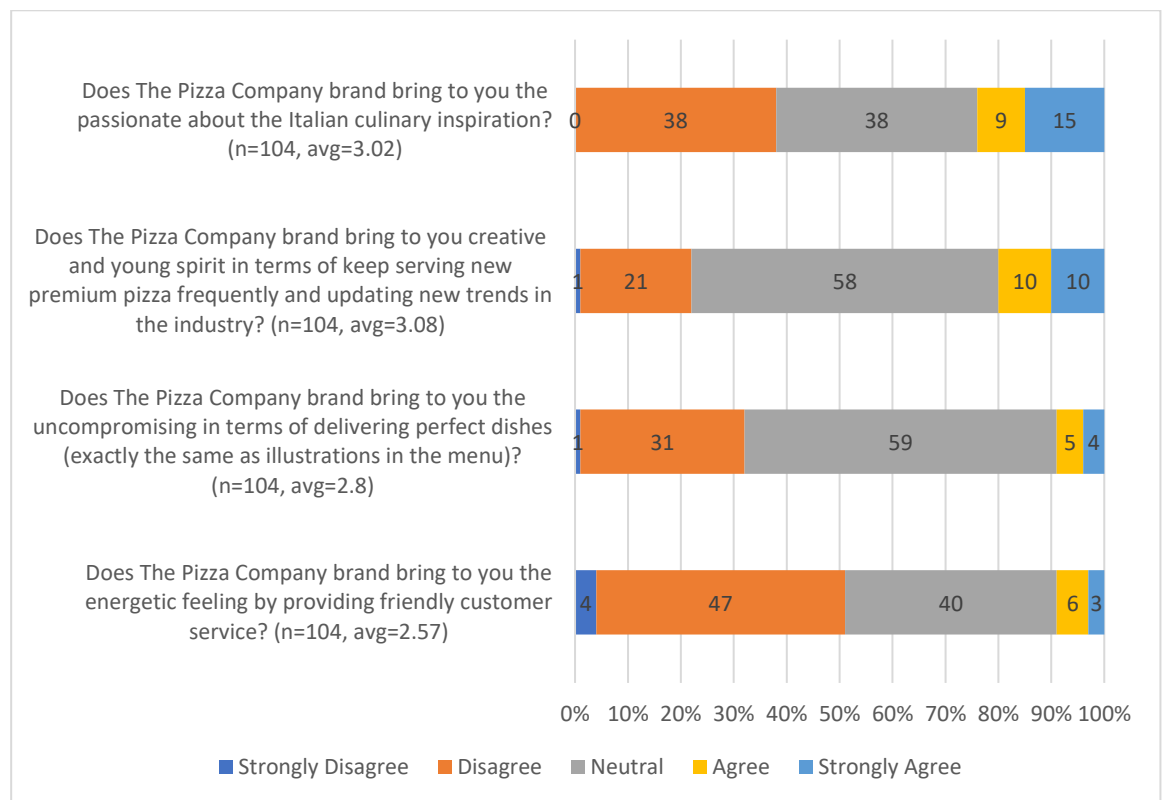


Figure 18. Question 6. Which characteristics that The Pizza Company brand brings to you?

The figure from question 6 demonstrates that most of the respondents are likely either agree or disagree with the characteristics of The Pizza Company brand in terms of 'uncompromising', 'passionate', 'creative and young spirit', 'energetic' that accounts for 59 per cent, 38 per cent, 58 per cent and 40 per cent respectively. However, the percentages of 'agree' and 'strongly agree' are really small which is less than 10 per cent in 'agree' and no more than 16 per cent in 'strongly agree'. Most noticeably, 15 per cent of respondents 'strongly agree' that they feel the passionate about the Italian culinary inspiration from the brand itself. In contrast, there are no one 'strongly disagree' with that opinion.

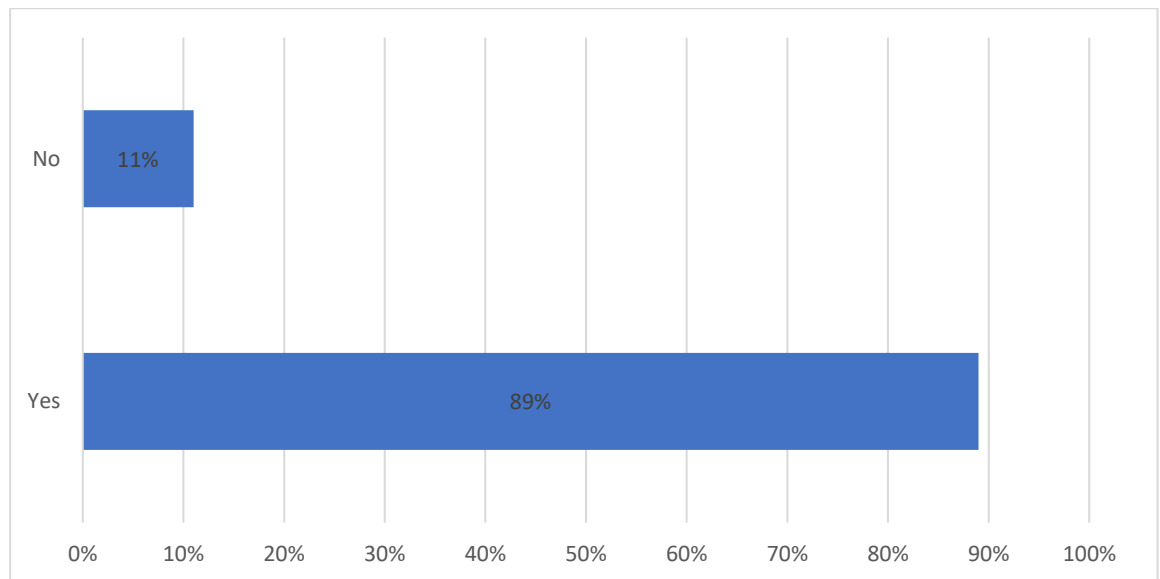


Figure 19. Question 7. Do you think The Pizza Company succeeds in providing high quality Italian cuisine inspiration dishes together with its professional services (the atmosphere and customer service) (n=104)

The percentages from the figure above shows a positive sign that nearly 90 per cent out of 104 respondents satisfy with the service at The Pizza Company. This means that despite the demanding in Vietnamese cuisine, The Pizza Company and the brand itself has been achieved a certain achievement so far in this fast-pace and strongly competitive industry.

Face-to-face interviews with Store Managers and Brand Manager

All the interviews are recorded and translated into English as a short script in order to support for the RQ 3 and 4 in order to have a deeper knowledge of how The Pizza Company brand is perceived from the inside point of view. More importantly, the interviews aim to exam whether the brand builder-Brand Manager and brand messengers-Store Managers are either on the same page. The outcomes clearly indicate some of the hidden problems in building the brand identity of The Pizza Company in Vietnam. The table belows is a short brief of the face-to-face interviews that were conducted the three Store Managers. It introduces the differences in perspectives towards The Pizza Compapy brand of these participants.

Table 2. Brief transcripts of face-to-face interviews with The Pizza Company Store Managers

	Store Manager No.1	Store Manager No.2	Store Manager No.3
1 Have you worked at any F&B franchise brands before?	Yes. With American brands such as Carl's Jr.	Yes. With a Korean pizza franchise and other American franchises such as KFC.	Yes. With an American franchise (Pizza Hut).
2 What made you want to work at The Pizza Company?	No specific reason. Just have friends who are working here.	Due to the needs of looking for a new job.	Have good experiences with The Pizza Company as a customer. Hence, it drives to the passionate at working for this brand.
3 What do you think about The Pizza Company brand (in terms of its brand identity, brand image, brand awareness)?	No clear opinion. Nice logo with fresh and eye-catching color.	The color of the logo is seen as a fast food image. It is really not the color for a fine dine-in restaurant. Suggested color should be black or darker colors. No clear brand awareness.	The restaurant is recognized easily by its fresh green color which represents for an energetic manner and fresh food ingredients. Have no clear opinion towards brand identity. However, in terms of brand awareness, the brand is seen everywhere.
4 If you describe The Pizza Company in three words, what would you describe?	Quality High-end Expensive	Quality Expensive Clean	Quality Energetic Italian cuisine inspiration
5 What do you satisfy the most about The Pizza Company in terms of its place, product/service, price and promotions?	Good location Variety choices of food Good service Many attractive promotions	Good location Good service High quality foods Quite expensive price	Good location Good service Value for money

Table 2. Brief transcripts of face-to-face interviews with The Pizza Company Store Managers (Continue)

6. Do you have any wishes or recommendations in terms of branding, products and service for The Pizza Company?	No idea. Happy with everything.	Better in delivering promotion programs since there are many similar promotions conducted at the same time. It drives to the confusions for customers and staffs.	No recommendation. Satisfy with what The Pizza Company brand has been doing.
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Along with the Store Managers, the Brand Manager also participated in the face-to-face interview with five open questions. The results are presented briefly in the English version below since the interview was conducted in Vietnamese.

1. What are marketing strategies used by The Pizza Company in order to access to Vietnam market and build its brand identity in Vietnam?

In 2013, being a follower in the pizza industry in Vietnam, The Pizza Company got benefits from the competitors in terms of saving costs on educating customers, and identifying potential market. In addition, The Pizza Company has learnt from the pioneer's mistakes in terms of customers reaction towards pizza and the local preferences. Therefore, the organization set its strategy at the beginning to build a casual restaurant concept for five years period, between 2013 and 2017. Once, the organization has its brand awareness and gain its market share; The Pizza Company aims to upgrade its brand concept to a fine dine-in restaurant chains. This is also the company's vision for the next three years 2018-2021.

2. What are achievements that The Pizza Company approaches between 2013 and 2017?

The most significant achievement which The Pizza Company has approached so far is its current position in Vietnam market. In more details, it becomes the second most loved pizza brand in Vietnam after Pizza Hut. In addition, the company has been expanding its target customers through building different store concepts in order to fit with the local preferences.

3. *What are strengths that The Pizza Company takes over its main competitors at the moment?*

The Pizza Company is really proud of its high quality product which is seen as the key strength of the organization. Therefore, The Pizza Company has been strengthening its customer relationship in keeping its promises as a fine dine-in restaurant. In addition, it differentiates from the competitors by its outstanding main products that are more local tastes such as its well-known seafood pizza.

4. *What are challenges that The Pizza Company facing in building its brand in Vietnam market?*

Besides its certain achievements as mentioned earlier, The Pizza Company has been facing some significant challenges in terms of building its service style in a more friendly approach than being formal like other fine dine-in restaurants. However, The Pizza Company staffs do not succeed in delivering this message, there still has a gap in interaction between staffs and customers. Another challenge is its ambience about building a restaurant concept which inspired by Italian cuisine. Because the customers are used to the modern and active concepts of The Pizza Company's key competitors. Hence, with the contemporary high end Italian cuisine concept, customers may perceive The Pizza Company as a luxury restaurant where they are not willing to pay expensive bills for having pizza, because pizza is not the main food category for Vietnamese consumers. However, this factor also can be seen as a strength. Because it helps The Pizza Company stay ahead from its competitors in providing the customers a real pizza experience. In a nutshell, the key challenge which The Pizza Company has been trying to solve is defining its identity in order to have convincing reasons for the customers choosing the brand over its competitors.

5. *What are visions that The Pizza Company sets in the next three years 2018-2021?*

After developing the market share in Vietnam since 2013, The Pizza Company aims to develop its brand to a further stage as a high-end restaurant chain between 2018 and 2021 from its current casual dine-in restaurant concept.

6 DISCUSSION OF EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

In order to clarify brand identity of The Pizza Company in Vietnam market, understanding clearly the market in terms of target customers, competitors and the business environment, it is strongly recommended to conduct a research which comprises literature review, research questions and data collection either quantitative or qualitative method. After conducting surveys and face-to-face interviews, the answers of all research questions are addressed that lead to the success of this study.

RQ1: What are crucial factors that influence on Vietnamese consumers' perception?

RQ2: How do Vietnamese customers react to pizza?

RQ3: How has The Pizza Company brand been perceived in Vietnam since 2013?

RQ4: What are the challenges that The Pizza Company has been facing in building its brand identity in Vietnam since 2013?

This chapter will go into more details the presented empirical findings in the previous chapter in order to answer four research questions.

6.1 Research Question 1: What are crucial factors that influence on Vietnamese consumers' perception?

Among other key elements such as getting positive recommendations from acquaintances, seeing products' ads everywhere, price, quality, and benefits from membership programs, the results of question 1, 2 and 3 clearly states that brand name, package design and good service are the key elements that Vietnamese consumers pay the most attention in their making purchase decisions, specifically in F&B industry. Brand name element accounts for 33 per cent of agree, while up to 40 per cent of disagree in quality. In addition, package design and good service factors account for 26 per cent which is much higher than other elements.

6.2 Research Question 2: How do Vietnamese customers react to pizza?

Question 4 and question 5 shows the answers that most of Vietnamese, 77 per cent of respondents think pizza is a fast food which is not really affordable, but also not expensive. More importantly, having pizza represents an image of sharing moments with the loved ones.

6.3 Research Question 3: How has The Pizza Company brand been perceived in Vietnam since 2013?

Question 6 and question 7 partially answer for this research question. It indicates that Vietnamese customers have a positive impression towards The Pizza Company brand in terms of 'uncompromising', 'passionate', 'energetic', 'creative and young spirit'. From the 'inner perspectives' which is collected via face-to-face interviews with Store Managers and Brand Manager, after 4 years since 2013, The Pizza Company has been the second leader in Vietnam market where the total number of restaurants are more than 50. This reflects the incredible growth in the shared market as well as attracting more loyal customers. However, the brand identity of The Pizza Company is still not clearly perceived by the Store Managers. They do not have any specific ideas towards the brand they are working for. In terms of brand image, there are general positive feedbacks such as energetic image, good service, and quality products. Noticeably, they do not have any strong motivation to work for the brand. This is seen as a threat for the company. Because from the insight perspective, the Store Managers should have knowledge about The Pizza Company, what the brand stands for, the vision and mission of the brand, and so on. However, this lack of knowledge drives to the misunderstanding of delivering The Pizza Company's brand message to the customers. It needs to take into consideration seriously because they are the ones who directly communicate with customers. In other words, they are seen as 'the brand representatives'. Therefore, the brand identity perceived by customers is strongly influenced through their communication with 'the brand representatives'. It answers the question of how unclear The Pizza Company brand identity is perceived in Vietnam since 2013.

6.4 Research Question 4: What are the challenges that The Pizza Company has been facing in building its brand identity in Vietnam since 2013?

The face-to-face interview with Brand Manager indicates answers for this research question. As mentioned earlier, even The Pizza Company has achieved a significant achievements for the past 4 years. There are key challenges pointed out by the Brand Manager such as its friendly approach service style and the ambiance in delivering the Italian cuisine inspiration restaurant concept. However, this brand is facing one of the most concerns is to define its brand identity in Vietnam market. The brand needs to differentiate itself from other competitors in order to maintain its customer relationship and sustainable growth. Especially, when it comes to move a step further to a fine dine-in restaurant in the next three year 2018-2021.

Due to the fact that The Pizza Company Vietnam is a franchise brand, therefore, it seems to be impossible to rebrand the brand to fits with the Vietnam market in terms of changing logo, redesigning restaurant concept. However, there are other approachable ways that help The Pizza Company to be better identify its brand in Vietnam market. In order to help The Pizza Company overcomes its challenges in building the brand identity in Vietnam, there are some recommendations given based on the theory background and The Pizza Company current stage. In addition, advantages and disadvantages of each recommendation are also taken into considerations that enable the organization to minimize the risks that they might face.

The Pizza Company keeps its brand identity as it is designed by the parent brand. However, in terms of product attributes, The Pizza Company Vietnam should invest more in developing its high quality products with the local tastes and build its flagship product which the organization does not have at the moment. Having flagship product allows The Pizza Company build a stronger brand image and enhance the brand customer relationships through providing value proposition for its customers. In terms of functional benefits, the customers would be more satisfied with new products that tailor their preferences, as well as building a bond with the brand through its flagship product. Because Vietnamese consumers in general are not loyal customers. Therefore, having flagship products that satisfy them the most will be a useful marketing tool to build the relationship with customers and make them become loyal customers for the brand. Nevertheless, in order to build flagship products, the company needs to strongly invest in its research market which is either conducted by the company itself or better with a market reseach company. However, it consumes time and financial investment.

As mentioned in the interview with the Brand Manager, The Pizza Company is the follower in the pizza industry in Vietnam. Therefore, the pizza image is built by the pioneers such as Pizza Hut and Domino's Pizza. These key competitors build a fast food pizza image for the Vietnamese consumers. Hence, in order to have a strong brand identity of building a fine dine-in restaurant, The Pizza Company needs to re-educate the consumers towards the real pizza concept. In order to do that, the company needs to conduct marketing activities both online and offline platforms to reach the target audiences. The marketing activities need to focus on building an image of having pizza in the restaurants where customers are served and communicated in a friendly environment. Moreover, a pizza story needs to be presented to customers. It helps The Pizza Company educate its customers and helps customers to better understanding about pizza which they have been misunderstanding as a fast food. The story can be done under an short animation of where it comes from, how it is developed and its journey throughout the centuries. It can create a better image for the brand in terms of building trust with its customers. This indicates that The Pizza Company is truly inspired by the Italian cuisine and its ethical business towards the cuisine history. These activities require a heavy financial investment. However, it is not only supporting on building The Pizza Company brand image, but also gain the brand positioning over its competitors.

From an insight point of view, The Pizza Company also needs to educate its staffs in order to help them better understanding the brand. It would gain the organizational contributes in terms of culture and people. Having more proffessional training, the staffs would be more motivated to work and contribute effectively to the organzational culture. It will create a better image for the brand in building its brand identity as a passionate, energetic, youth spirited brand. However, same as given recommendations above, this activity requires long term investments in recruiting and training programs.

7 CONCLUSION

7.1 Outcomes of the Research

As a result, the main objective of this study is to understanding Vietnamese consumers perception towards The Pizza Company brand in order to help it identify its brand identity. The process of achieving the research objective comprises the answers of four indicated research questions. In terms of theory, the research was done by using the theory of Brand, Branding, Strategic Brand Management, Building Strong Brands, and Brand Identity Planning Model. Hence, the research questions were designed according to the outline of the research. At the end, the answers of research questions have been delivered in order to come to the conclusion for the research objective.

Quantitative research is used in the form of a closed-ended questionnaire for the research. And in order to support for the collected statistics, qualitative research is chosen in the form of face-to-face interviews.

The outcome of the research is reached when it shows Vietnamese consumers pay more attention towards brand name, package design, and quality service. These elements are highly attributed in the process of making purchase decision of consumers. In addition, 77 per cent of 104 respondents do think Pizza is a fast food and this food is usually attached with shared moments of customers. Therefore, it brings valuable information for The Pizza Company brand to understand what their brand is perceived by its customers, whether it is fully matched with the message of what The Pizza Company brand is sending. Another notable finding is that, consumers mostly agree with the 'uncompromising', 'passionate', 'energetic', 'creative and young spirit' characteristics of the brand via their experience with it. However, this is not perceived completely and convincingly. This problem is also figured out by the insight points of view through the face-to-face interview with Store Managers who are directly interacting with customers and conducting daily operations in the restaurants. More than that, they are also seen as the brand delivers who tend to understand clearly their customers preferences. Nevertheless, the results of interviews shows that they get confused of The Pizza Company brand identity. From the Brand Manager perspective, the brand identity is perceived clearly and it is build based on the combination of the Brand Guideline from the parent brand and the understanding of Vietnam market. However, building brand identity is challenging due to the miscommunication between the brand and its customers. Therefore, it suggests that The Pizza Company brand should work on their training in order to assure their brand value is delivered successfully. In addition, it needs to work along with the updated market research to maintain their customers relationship in terms of their changes in values and preferences towards the brand.

7.2 Limitations of the Research and Suggestions for Future Research

7.2.1 Limitations of the Research

Due to the uncontrolled element in terms of weather condition, there are only 104 respondents for the survey. Hence, it influences on the validity and reliability of the research. In addition, the surveys were taken place during the weekend where the staffs were attached with their service at the restaurants. Therefore, they were not able to support in sending out the survey questions to customers. Another constraint is that The Pizza Company did not offer any incentives for participants, this is somehow influence on the willing of participating from customers.

In terms of language barrier, the survey was conducted in Vietnamese since the target group is Vietnamese. However, the collected data needs to be translated into English. Therefore, it is evitable misunderstanding in the translation.

7.2.2 Suggestions for Future Research

Since the study is conducted in a small scale of population, this leads to the limited outcomes for the research. However, the study is a key stone for the company to exam its brand identity from a different point of view with different approach method. It is strongly recommended that it would provide more accurate outcomes when the surveys is conducted in larger scale in both online and offline platform. Hence, it can reach more variety of customers and be able to reveal potential challenges as well as benefits that the brand might have. Once the brand identity is addressed. It is important for the firm to conduct further research in terms of brand performance by conducting and investing more in its marketing activities. By doing this, The Pizza Company would be able to gain its brand awareness and enhance brand relationship with the customers.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Questionnaire survey (English Version)

APPENDIX 2: Questionnaire survey (Vietnamese Version)

APPENDIX 3: Interview questions-Store Managers (English Version)

APPENDIX 4: Interview questions-Brand Manager (English Version)

APPENDIX 5: Contents generated from PSPP

APPENDIX 1: Questionnaire survey (English Version)



BRANDING SURVEY OF THE PIZZA COMPANY VIETNAM

This survey is done by:

Customers who are having meals at The Pizza Company restaurants (officers, family, couples, students)

Estimated time for completing this survey: 3-5 minutes

Please cross X for your chosen answers

1. Among the following elements, how important are they to you when it comes to buy a product for the first time?	1=Unimportant	2=Of little important	3=Moderately Important	4=Important	5=Very Important
a. The quality that you can benefit from					
b. The price that suits with your budget					
c. The outstanding package it has					
d. Well-known brand name it comes from					
e. See its ads everywhere					
f. Recommendations from your acquaintances					
2. Among the following elements, how important are they to you when it comes to repurchase the product?	1=Unimportant	2=Of little important	3=Moderately Important	4=Important	5=Very Important
a. Satisfy with the value that you received last time					

b. Get more benefits to be its loyal customer					
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3. In Food and Beverage industry, which factors do you think are the key to make you come back next time?	1=Unimportant	2=Of little important	3=Moderately Important	4=Important	5=Very Important
a. The variety choices of food					
b. Affordable price					
c. Attractive promotions					
d. Good service (dine-in and home delivery)					
e. Comfortable space					
f. Attractive membership programs					

4. Do you see pizza as a fast food?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (0)

5. Which characteristics that The Pizza Company brand brings to you:	1=Totally Disagree	2=Disagree	3=Neutral	4=Agree	5=Totally Agree
a. Energetic by providing friendly customer service					
b. Creative and Young-spirited in terms of keep serving new premium pizza frequently and updating new trends					
c. Passionate about the Italian culinary cuisine inspiration					
d. Uncompromising in terms of delivering perfect dishes (exactly the same as illustrations in the menu)					

6. When it comes to pizza, which characteristics that pop-up in your mind?	1=Totally Disagree	2=Disagree	3=Neutral	4=Agree	5=Totally Agree
a. Convenient					
b. Expensive					

c. Joyful moments					
d. Western style (trendy)					

7. Do you think The Pizza Company succeeds in providing high quality Italian cuisine inspiration dishes together with its professional service (the atmosphere and customer service)

- Yes (1)
- No (0)

8. Do you have any suggestions in order to help The Pizza Company satisfy you better? In terms of:

- ☐ Products
- ☐ Service
- ☐ Restaurant atmosphere
- ☐ Others

Required Information*

Age	Under 18	Between 18-24
	Between 25-40	Above 40
Occupation	Officer	Housewife
	Student	Others
	Self-employed	

APPENDIX 2: Questionnaire survey (Vietnamese Version)



Khảo Sát ý kiến khách hàng về Thương Hiệu The Pizza Company Việt Nam

Đối tượng khảo sát:

Khách hàng dùng bữa tại nhà hàng The Pizza Company (nhân viên văn phòng, gia đình, bạn bè, sinh viên và học sinh).

Thời gian hoàn thành khảo sát: 3-5ph

Vui lòng đánh dấu X vào được chọn.

1. Đánh giá tầm quan trọng của các yếu tố sau đây tác động đến việc mua hàng của quý khách	1=Không quan trọng	2=ít quan trọng	3=Bình thường	4=Quan trọng	5=Rất quan trọng
a. Chất lượng mà quý khách nhận được					
b. Giá cả phù hợp					
c. Sản phẩm được trình bày bắt mắt					
d. Sản phẩm đến từ một thương hiệu nổi tiếng					
e. Sản phẩm được quảng cáo khắp nơi					
f. Qua lời giới thiệu của bạn bè, người thân					
2. Đánh giá tầm quan trọng của các yếu tố sau đây tác động đến việc tiếp tục mua hàng của quý khách	1=Không quan trọng	2=ít quan trọng	3=Bình thường	4=Quan trọng	5=Rất quan trọng
a. HÀi lòng với chất lượng mà quý khách nhận được ở lần mua trước					
b. Nhận được nhiều lợi ích hơn khi trở thành thành viên của thương hiệu mà sản phẩm quý khách đã mua					
3. Trong ngành ẩm thực, điều gì quý khách nghĩ là yếu tố quan trọng để quý khách tiếp tục mua hàng vào lần sau	1=Không quan trọng	2=ít quan trọng	3=Bình thường	4=Quan trọng	5=Rất quan trọng

a. Sự lựa chọn đa dạng của món ăn					
b. Giá cả hợp lý					
c. Nhiều chương trình khuyến mãi hấp dẫn					
d. Phong cách phục vụ chuyên nghiệp (ví dụ như không gian nhà hàng, thái độ phục vụ của nhân viên, v.v...)					
e. Nhận được nhiều ưu đãi từ thẻ thành viên					

4. Quý khách nghĩ rằng PIZZA là một loại thức ăn nhanh?

- a. Có (1)
b. Không (0)

	1=Hoàn toàn không đồng ý	2=Không đồng ý	3=Bình thường	4=Đồng ý	5=Hoàn toàn đồng ý
5. Nói đến pizza, điều gì quý khách nghĩ đến đầu tiên?					
a. Món ăn tiện lợi					
b. Món ăn đắt tiền					
c. Gắn liền với những khoảnh khắc sum vầy cùng gia đình, bạn bè					
d. Hội nhập theo xu hướng Phương Tây hóa như hiện nay					
6. Những đặc điểm mà Thương hiệu The Pizza Company mang đến cho quý khách	1=Hoàn toàn không đồng ý	2=Không đồng ý	3=Bình thường	4=Đồng ý	5=Hoàn toàn đồng ý
a. Tràn đầy năng lượng với đội ngũ nhân viên thân thiện, năng động và hoạt bát					
b. Tràn đầy sáng tạo trong việc không ngừng cho ra mắt các dòng pizza hảo hạng và các chương trình khuyến mãi hấp dẫn, bắt kịp xu hướng hiện nay					
c. Niềm đam mê ẩm thực lấy từ nguồn cảm hứng của kinh đô ẩm thực Ý					
d. Luôn đảm bảo mang đến cho quý khách những sản phẩm hoàn hảo nhất như được mô tả trong menu					

7. Quý khách có nghĩ rằng Thương hiệu The Pizza Company đã thành công trong việc mang đến cho khách hàng những món ăn chất lượng hàng đầu mang phong cách Ý cùng với trải nghiệm trong môi trường phục vụ chuyên nghiệp và hiện đại?

a. Có (1)

b. Không (0)

8. Xin quý khách vui lòng đóng góp ý kiến để giúp The Pizza Company chúng tôi được phục vụ quý khách một cách tốt nhất.

- Về sản phẩm
- Về dịch vụ.....
- Về không gian nhà hàng.....
- Khác

❖ Thông tin khách hàng (Bắt buộc)*

Tuổi:

☐ Dưới 18

☐ Từ 18 đến 24

☐ Từ 25 đến 40

☐ Trên 40

Nghề nghiệp:

NVVP

NộiTrợ

Học Sinh, SV

Khác

Kinh Doanh

APPENDIX 3: Interview questions-Store Managers (English Version)

1. Have you worked at any F&B franchise brands before?
2. What made you want to work at The Pizza Company?
3. What do you think about The Pizza Company brand (in terms of its brand identity, brand image, brand awareness)?
4. If you describe The Pizza Company in three words, what would you describe?
5. What do you satisfy the most about The Pizza Company in terms of its place, product/service, price and promotions?
6. Do you have any wishes or recommendations in terms of branding, products and service for The Pizza Company?

APPENDIX 4: Interview questions-Brand Manager (English Version)

1. What are marketing strategies used by The Pizza Company in order to access to Vietnam market and build its brand identity in Vietnam?
2. What are achievements that The Pizza Company approaches between 2014 and 2017?
3. What are strengths that The Pizza Company takes over its main competitors at the moment?
4. What are challenges that The Pizza Company facing in building its brand in Vietnam market?
5. What are visions that The Pizza Company sets in the next three years 2018-2021?

APPENDIX 5: Contents generated from PSPP

Question 1: Frequency Tables

1a. How it is important to you in terms of quality when it comes to buy a product for the first time

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Unimportant	1	22	21.15	21.15	21.15
Of little important	2	41	39.42	39.42	60.58
Moderately important	3	15	14.42	14.42	75.00
Important	4	14	13.46	13.46	88.46
Very important	5	12	11.54	11.54	100.00
Total		104	100.0	100.0	

1b. How it is important to you in terms of price when it comes to buy a product for the first time

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Unimportant	1	9	8.65	8.65	8.65
Of little important	2	71	68.27	68.27	76.92
Moderately important	3	12	11.54	11.54	88.46
Important	4	9	8.65	8.65	97.12
Very important	5	3	2.88	2.88	100.00
Total		104	100.0	100.0	

1c. How it is important to you in terms of outstanding package design when it comes to buy a product for the first time

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Unimportant	1	3	2.88	2.88	2.88
Of little important	2	14	13.46	13.46	16.35
Moderately important	3	58	55.77	55.77	72.12
Important	4	28	26.92	26.92	99.04
Very important	5	1	.96	.96	100.00
Total		104	100.0	100.0	

1d. How it is important to you in terms of brand name when it comes to buy a product for the first time

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Unimportant	1	3	2.88	2.88	2.88
Of little important	2	34	32.69	32.69	35.58
Moderately important	3	32	30.77	30.77	66.35
Important	4	27	25.96	25.96	92.31
Very important	5	8	7.69	7.69	100.00
Total		104	100.0	100.0	

1e. How it is important to you in making purchase decision of a product for the first time if you see its ads everywhere

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Unimportant	1	3	2.88	2.88	2.88
Of little important	2	33	31.73	31.73	34.62
Moderately important	3	38	36.54	36.54	71.15
Important	4	11	10.58	10.58	81.73
Very important	5	19	18.27	18.27	100.00
Total		104	100.0	100.0	

1f. How it is important to you in making purchase decision of a product for the first time when you get positive recommendations from your acquaintances

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Unimportant	1	9	8.65	8.65	9.62
Of little important	2	31	29.81	29.81	39.42
Moderately important	3	39	37.50	37.50	76.92
Important	4	10	9.62	9.62	86.54
Very important	5	14	13.46	13.46	100.00
Total		104	100.0	100.0	

Question 2: Frequency Tables

2a. How it is important to you to make you repurchase the product when you were satisfied with the value in the first time

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Unimportant	1	9	8.65	8.65	8.65
Of little important	2	42	40.38	40.38	49.04
Moderately important	3	39	37.50	37.50	86.54

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Important	4	9	8.65	8.65	95.19
Very important	5	5	4.81	4.81	100.00
Total		104	100.0	100.0	

2b. How it is important to you to repurchase the product if you will get more benefits to be its loyal customers

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Unimportant	1	4	3.85	3.85	3.85
Of little important	2	37	35.58	35.58	39.42
Moderately important	3	48	46.15	46.15	85.58
Important	4	7	6.73	6.73	92.31
Very important	5	8	7.69	7.69	100.00
Total		104	100.0	100.0	

Question 3: Descriptive Statistic and Frequency Tables

Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Mean	Std Dev
3a. In F&B industry, do you think that the variety choices of food is a crucial factor for you to come back next time?	104	2.30	1.04
3b. In F&B industry, do you agree that the affordable price is one of the key factors to make you come back next time?	104	2.89	1.22
3c. In F&B industry, do you think that the given attractive promotions is an important factor for you to come back next time?	104	2.88	.98
3d. In F&B industry, do you think that good service (both dine-in and home delivery) is a key factor to make you come back next time?	104	2.98	1.14
3e. In F&B industry, do you agree that having comfortable space in the restaurant is important for you to come back next time?	104	3.05	1.06
3f. In F&B industry, do you think the attractive membership programs plays an important role for you to come back next time?	104	2.72	1.00

Frequency Tables

3a. In F&B industry, do you think that the variety choices of food is a crucial factor for you to come back next time?

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	23	22.12	22.12	22.12
Disagree	2	44	42.31	42.31	64.42
Neutral	3	25	24.04	24.04	88.46
Agree	4	7	6.73	6.73	95.19
Strongly Agree	5	5	4.81	4.81	100.00
Total		104	100.0	100.0	

3b. In F&B industry, do you agree that the affordable price is one of the key factors to make you come back next time?

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	5	4.81	4.81	4.81
Disagree	2	50	48.08	48.08	52.88
Neutral	3	18	17.31	17.31	70.19
Agree	4	13	12.50	12.50	82.69
Strongly Agree	5	18	17.31	17.31	100.00
Total		104	100.0	100.0	

3c. In F&B industry, do you think that the given attractive promotions is an important factor for you to come back next time?

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	10	9.62	9.62	9.62
Disagree	2	21	20.19	20.19	29.81
Neutral	3	51	49.04	49.04	78.85
Agree	4	16	15.38	15.38	94.23
Strongly Agree	5	6	5.77	5.77	100.00
Total		104	100.0	100.0	

3d. In F&B industry, do you think that good service (both dine-in and home delivery) is a key factor to make you come back next time?

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	9	8.65	8.65	8.65
Disagree	2	31	29.81	29.81	38.46
Neutral	3	27	25.96	25.96	64.42
Agree	4	27	25.96	25.96	90.38
Strongly Agree	5	10	9.62	9.62	100.00
Total		104	100.0	100.0	

3e. In F&B industry, do you agree that having comfortable space in the restaurant is important for you to come back next time?

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	6	5.77	5.77	5.77
Disagree	2	25	24.04	24.04	29.81
Neutral	3	44	42.31	42.31	72.12
Agree	4	16	15.38	15.38	87.50
Strongly Agree	5	13	12.50	12.50	100.00
Total		104	100.0	100.0	

3f. In F&B industry, do you think the attractive membership programs plays an important role for you to come back next time?

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	9	8.65	8.65	8.65
Disagree	2	34	32.69	32.69	41.35
Neutral	3	47	45.19	45.19	86.54
Agree	4	5	4.81	4.81	91.35
Strongly Agree	5	9	8.65	8.65	100.00
Total		104	100.0	100.0	

Question 4: Frequency Table

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
No	0	24	23.08	23.08	23.08
Yes	1	80	76.92	76.92	100.00
Total		104	100.0	100.0	

Question 5: Descriptive Statistics and Frequency Tables

Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Mean	Std Dev
5a. When it comes to Pizza, do you think convenience is one of the key characteristics?	104	2.32	.64
5b. When it comes to Pizza, do you think expensive is one of its characteristics?	104	2.93	.78
5c. When it comes to Pizza, do you think it reminds you of joyful moments with your loved ones?	104	2.88	.96
5d. When it comes to Pizza, do you think that it's a Western style?	104	2.78	.76

Frequency Tables

5a. When it comes to Pizza, do you think convenience is one of the key characteristics?

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	6	5.77	5.77	5.77
Disagree	2	59	56.73	56.73	62.50
Neutral	3	31	29.81	29.81	92.31
Agree	4	4	3.85	3.85	96.15
Strongly Agree	5	4	3.85	3.85	100.00
Total		104	100.0	100.0	

5b. When it comes to Pizza, do you think expensive is one of its characteristics?

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	1	.96	.96	.96
Disagree	2	27	25.96	25.96	26.92
Neutral	3	59	56.73	56.73	83.65
Agree	4	12	11.54	11.54	95.19

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Strongly Agree	5	5	4.81	4.81	100.00
Total		104	100.0	100.0	

5c. When it comes to Pizza, do you think it reminds you of joyful moments with your loved ones?

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	3	2.88	2.88	2.88
Disagree	2	40	38.46	38.46	41.35
Neutral	3	34	32.69	32.69	74.04
Agree	4	21	20.19	20.19	94.23
Strongly Agree	5	6	5.77	5.77	100.00
Total		104	100.0	100.0	

5d. When it comes to Pizza, do you think that it's a Western style?

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	1	.96	.96	.96
Disagree	2	37	35.58	35.58	36.54
Neutral	3	54	51.92	51.92	88.46
Agree	4	8	7.69	7.69	96.15
Strongly Agree	5	4	3.85	3.85	100.00
Total		104	100.0	100.0	

Question 6: Descriptive Statistics and Frequency Tables

Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Mean	Std Dev
6a. Does The Pizza Company brand bring to you the energetic feeling by providing friendly customer service?	104	2.57	.79
6b. Does The Pizza Company brand bring to you creative and young spirit in terms of keep serving new premium pizza frequently and updating new trends in the industry?	104	3.08	.88
6c. Does The Pizza Company brand bring to you the passionate about the Italian culinary inspiration?	104	3.02	1.04
6d. Does The Pizza Company brand bring to you the uncompromising in terms of delivering perfect dishes (exactly the same as illustrations in the menu)?	104	2.80	.72

Frequency Tables

6a. Does The Pizza Company brand bring to you the energetic feeling by providing friendly customer service?

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	4	3.85	3.85	3.85
Disagree	2	49	47.12	47.12	50.96
Neutral	3	42	40.38	40.38	91.35
Agree	4	6	5.77	5.77	97.12
Strongly Agree	5	3	2.88	2.88	100.00
Total		104	100.0	100.0	

6b. Does The Pizza Company brand bring to you creative and young spirit in terms of keep serving new premium pizza frequently and updating new trends in the industry?

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	1	.96	.96	.96
Disagree	2	22	21.15	21.15	22.12
Neutral	3	60	57.69	57.69	79.81
Agree	4	10	9.62	9.62	89.42
Strongly Agree	5	11	10.58	10.58	100.00
Total		104	100.0	100.0	

6c. Does The Pizza Company brand bring to you the passionate about the Italian culinary inspiration?

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Disagree	2	39	37.50	37.50	37.50
Neutral	3	40	38.46	38.46	75.96
Agree	4	9	8.65	8.65	84.62
Strongly Agree	5	16	15.38	15.38	100.00
Total		104	100.0	100.0	

6d. Does The Pizza Company brand bring to you the uncompromising in terms of delivering perfect dishes (exactly the same as illustrations in the menu)?

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	1	.96	.96	.96
Disagree	2	32	30.77	30.77	31.73
Neutral	3	62	59.62	59.62	91.35
Agree	4	5	4.81	4.81	96.15
Strongly Agree	5	4	3.85	3.85	100.00
Total		104	100.0	100.0	

Question 7: Frequency Table

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
No	0	11	10.58	10.58	10.58
Yes	1	93	89.42	89.42	100.00
Total		104	100.0	100.0	